

Curtin University Sustainable Policy Institute

Socially Sustainable Community Building Practices

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature: 

Date: 29.11. November 2013

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This research journey has been far longer than I anticipated at the beginning. However, I persevered because I felt that I have reflected and deliberated upon this subject for too many years not to have learnt something that could be useful to others. Although some of the work referred in this research was carried out many years ago, my continuous reflections throughout this period have included looking at my present day work and applying some of the knowledge gained to today's human service settings. In this I have refined what I have found, in true action research tradition.

Two wonderful ladies who encouraged me in my studies and whose delight in me pursuing a doctorate, were my mother and my mother in law. Both have unfortunately now passed away, but they have been in my mind's eye to stop me faltering. I would like to dedicate this research to them both.

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ABSTRACT

SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BUILDING PRACTICES

The outcome sought in this thesis is a better understanding of how community practice might build good communities, which is in line with the aspirations of so many people in modern society. The promise held out in this research is therefore one that can appeal to numerous people in the community. After all who would want to live in a 'bad' community? No politician could sell the idea of creating 'bad' communities. Indeed the selling point for most modern day politicians is strategies to get rid of the bad and make life 'good' for everyone.

Consequently I believe that this project could be of interest to a wide variety of people from agricultural scientists to politicians and to social scientists.

This research seeks, through interviews with community development practitioners, input from my own practice and analysis from relevant literature, to provide a contribution of new knowledge that will result in community development practice becoming more successful and purposeful. The overall aim is to 'improve' knowledge about effective community development practice which could offer insight both to other practitioners as well as to myself for improvement in our practice. To achieve this there is an exploration of what I describe as the micro practices involved in community development, that is the commencing stages involved in building relationships.

In this research successful community development practitioners are interviewed using experiential learning methodology, which is designed to investigate what the practitioners understand as a good practice, whilst they simultaneously endeavour to improve their practice. The emphasis is upon understanding micro practice which is shown to be poorly documented though an essential element of joining and engagement in community practice.

The research uses an action-learning framework for presentation as indicated in the second chapter, which further develops the meaningful framework I use to explain my own practice development.

The research methodology is bricolage, which is a complex multi method approach that allows both experience and observation to be drawn simultaneously into the analysis of the data. The reason behind this choice of

methodology is that I am exploring the human dimension of community practice, which requires a methodology that is open to inclusion as contexts change, whilst not being restricted by a more positivist approach.

From my own experience, data from these interviews and lessons drawn from relevant literature, questions are asked about what is important for building relationships in community development. The questions help deconstruct this building of relationships into sub sets or micro practices. Hence I develop a chapter on joining and engagement, another on relationships and yet another on the values that drive the direction of practitioners practice.

Questions in this research help to generate data on how joining, engagement and relationships are brought about, plus what values are involved in these actions.

In this research, the term ‘community’ is explored, and it is found to generally refer to the existence of meaningful relationships and networks. Indeed, Cohen (1985:12) identifies ‘community’ as ‘a group of people who have something in common with each other’. In this thesis community development is seen as suggested by Taylor (2003:11), ‘as the practice offering resources, social glue, alternative ideas and knowledge that are essential to society in creating the morality and good’.

In the extracts from interviews with practitioners, it is illustrated that they believe a number of elements to be important and useful for community practice. The practitioners interviewed saw their own practice frameworks as being significantly influenced by their understanding of themselves as individuals, with a sense of their history, influences, values and a sense of their spirituality. The values involved are associated with the ‘good’ and virtues, which include trust, honesty, respect and love. In turn, these same aspects help to inform the practitioners’ work in understanding the history and values of those with whom they work.

It is found that frameworks are a useful concept and ‘frame’ in the minds of the practitioners, an understanding of themselves and others, with the aim of creating actions that achieve meaningful change both for the practitioner and also for the dreams and aspirations of those with whom they work. The practitioners see frameworks as a way of being aware of who they (practitioners) are as people, and who the people are with whom they work which in turn informs the building of connections and relationships between them, whilst working in the direction of the noted values. Hence practice frameworks are about the community practitioner as a whole person

combining in virtuous values with others towards a common purpose. They are action-oriented and with a purpose, aligned to notions of social justice. When practitioners have found frameworks other than their own useful, to either use for themselves or to extend into an organisation, these have also reflected the values of the individual practitioners, as seen in the data from interviewees 5, 6 and 8. This movement from practice frameworks with their individual power towards more generic frameworks to guide more general but relevant practice has been the subject of much thought, writing and research to explore what is important in guiding community practice.

Throughout this thesis there is an emphasis on micro practice and not taking for granted notions of community engagement. I develop this micro to macro framework and it is suggested to be a way of understanding the strengths and weaknesses in potential and identified community development practice frameworks.

In addition, this research looks at commonalities of practice with the aim of identifying what practice, values and frameworks practitioners find useful in understanding what they believe to be a good practice. This last term 'good practice' is further deconstructed to see what is meant by the term and how practitioners can intentionally aspire to improve their practice. Frameworks are identified that might assist in understanding what is meant by practice improvement.

This thesis adds new knowledge in terms of micro-practice; it also provides valuable starting points for further research into improving the effectiveness of practitioner practice.

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

The Evolution of My Community Development Practice

This chapter is the story of how my community development practice developed which in turn leads to the research questions in this thesis, which focus on areas I have reflected upon as needing more thought and reflection. Beginning with when I grew up, I detail my education, work and life experiences that have influenced my practice; what dilemmas I have encountered and the resultant lessons learnt which I have then used to develop my own purposeful practice. Throughout this process I highlight that a sense of self is very important when consciously reflecting on practice development. Later I draw parallels between my own experience and the common challenges faced by community development practitioners.

My Story and Influences – a reflection

Born in England to working class parents and Church of England (protestant) origins, I attended grammar school and then studied Sociology and Economic & Social History at university in the United Kingdom. This built upon my interest in history and explanations of how beliefs, notions of deviant behaviour and other social phenomena have developed.

Ten years later, I studied social work in Australia and later still a Master's degree in community work in the United Kingdom – which helped me to reflect upon what I had learnt during a career in human service delivery. This study occurred in a climate of Marxism, socialism and feminism some 25 years ago.

During my working life, I have been a high school teacher in the United Kingdom, with mainly Pakistani and West Indian students. I spent 13 years in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia – where I commenced the Probation & Parole Service alone in an area the size of France. In that same area, I was later the Manager of Community Welfare, being in charge of child protection, community development and Aboriginal Reserves.

Subsequently and over the past 30 years I have had management responsibilities for child protection and community work in both remote and urban settings; community work training across Western Australia; a Centre for Community Skills; and the development of parenting services for Aboriginal communities in the most remote area of Western Australia. All of these fall under the umbrella of community development which is associated

in Australia with some kind of government welfare responsibility.

As a result of particularly working across cultures, I have witnessed and reflected first hand on how many social work and welfare practices are lacking coherence as to why they exist, and do not make much sense to the workers or clients and in fact are very ineffective. These practices have been developed in other countries for use in those countries and workers find difficulties transferring these practices into situations for which they were not designed. This lack of 'fit' is a common phenomenon facing community and social workers, particularly in cross cultural settings (Midgeley 1981). Indeed, terms such as 'third world' settings are often used when Western (first world) trained workers are trying hard to make their knowledge effective. Because of this lack of 'fit', I became very interested in community work, community work training and the supervision of community workers; having been influenced by writers such as James Midgeley (1981) in his book 'Professional Imperialism, Social Work and the Third World', where he directly addresses the problem posed for workers who have been trained in Western concepts and procedures, yet are trying to work in a third world context. My Master's thesis was entitled 'Towards Appropriate Social Work', which was influenced by a major report of the time, the UK Barclay Report (NISW 1982) that advocated for what it called community social work. That report was an evaluation of community work thinking and how it had developed to ensure sensitivity to the context of where workers were located, including acknowledgement of cultural differences.

A particular influence upon me came from having had a mentor for 20 years – Tony Kelly, who is a Gandhian, and taught community work at the University of Queensland. Over this period, as a paid training consultant to my work unit, he told me how he used my briefings to develop training, allowed me to debrief him after training sessions and was readily available to discuss with me relevant situations that confronted me, including reference to new literature. He is now with Oxfam continuing his work in India but interestingly is also a consultant to BHP Billiton internationally. He regularly reports in training sessions that multi nationals are very much interested in engaging communities for their own longer term sustainability, wishing to plan with those communities for their future joint aspirations. As a result, he believes that these multinationals are far easier to train in engagement, learning how they can go forward in partnership; they are more motivated than government and non-government agencies. This context of working across huge power differentials, which is between large industry and people in poverty, provides new messages for workers who have been commonly faced with challenges delivering positive outcomes for their clientele, and have often used social action as a way forward, in these settings. As in this example, Tony Kelly has the ability to find ways forward and

introduced both myself and many others to community work methodologies as a way of working. Having employed a number of his former students, I have observed first hand that they are trained in clearly identifying their practice method – which helps to authenticate community work practice in a post-modernist, bureaucratic agency -organised world. The usefulness of these methodologies gave rise to my interest in discovering what methodologies were effective in community development.

Making Sense

For many years of my working life, and particularly since the late 1970s, I have tried to ‘make sense’ of the work I was doing. This was not just a ‘making sense’ process, it was one whereby I reflected on what I was doing in order to learn both from what I saw and, in parallel, with what I read; to then use this analysis in order to plan and make my work more effective. One of my earliest impressions of this ‘making sense’ was in learning about *participant observation* whilst studying sociology where Whyte (1981), describes local street gangs as a participant observer, with observations of the dynamics between gang members and the rules that developed both formally and informally. From there my interest continued and developed further as I wrote papers such as ‘Feeling tired after late reporting – the karpman triangle’ (Oades 1974)¹ – which was a reflection of my experience as a parole officer, working with those who had broken the law.

My Master’s degree thesis, entitled “Towards Appropriate Social Work” (Oades 1985) was another example of my inclination towards reflection in a search for what is effective in my work. Indeed, the Master’s course was marketed as being for practitioners who wished to reflect on their work and to decide where they wanted to go next in their careers. That research at the time was the ultimate one for me of reflecting on my work.

Prior to this, my earlier studies in Sociology and Economic & Social History had added to my inquisitiveness about society, which resulted in my structural questioning of society and the justice system as a Probation and Parole Officer. In the Probation and Parole Service I also considered I would make a good training officer, in which role I would have needed to make sense of the work, in a manner that identified effective practice in which my colleagues could be trained and supported.

This interest in sociology and social history had highlighted for me the relevance of systems theory, patterns, people history and values and to how

¹ The Karpman Drama Triangle was originally conceived by Stephen B.Karpman in his article ‘Fairy Tales and Script Drama Analysis’, and used to plot the interplay and behavioural moves between two or more people. Original source: Transactional Analysis Bulletin Vol 7, No 26, 1968

all these interact with and affect each other. I had explored explanations designed to justify how some societies took particular forms, and realised how these societies and systems were interrelated. I was enthralled with explanations in the sociology of religion, and the sociology of deviance. So in parallel with my interest in effective methodologies,

I also became interested and began reflecting upon how life influences affected practitioners, and how their stories became a reflection of who they are in their practice.

Stories – a reflection of the self

This chapter is all a part of my story, reflecting upon how my thoughts developed, arriving today, at how I decided upon the research topic. It is also about understanding my own position and what effect I have within the research process. For me, telling a research story is an integral part of research practice. A story does not appear out of nowhere. It is written by a researcher who brings his or her own values to the writing process. Consequently, the story can be understood as the articulation of the values of the writer, and communicates these values through its content and form. As Husserl (1982) (cited by McNiff in Clandinin 2007:319) indicates with action research reports (and this current research is presented in the action research/action learning mode), the content is about accounting for oneself through a process of showing the validity of the works as it links terms with realizing the researcher's own values.

Yet traditionally it has been assumed, as highlighted by Furlong & Oancea (2005) (cited by McNiff in Clandinin 2007:308-329) that there is a clear distinction between the two worlds; the world of research and the world of policy and practice, representing 'two communities' (Clandinin 2007:315). On the one hand there is the world of research, based on explicit systematic work aimed at growth of theoretical knowledge. Practice and policy on the other hand are seen as taking place in the "real world" a world based on different forms of knowledge – e.g. on tacit knowledge and wisdom. As a result, many universities insist on excluding the personal pronoun from dissertation and thesis titles. Questions of "How do I...?" are rejected in favour of bland titles that are appropriate to forms of abstract theory not grounded in the researcher's own personal knowledge (Whitehead 1989:137-153).

Hence with mainstream educational research literature, the majority is written in a propositional form and abides by the conventions of the traditional social sciences and seldom does one encounter the word *I*. Yet at the same time, it is widely acknowledged (Sen.1999:44) that world

sustainability is premised on the personal commitment of citizens finding ways, in free agreement, of taking responsibility for their own futures through negotiated collaboration. So the 'I' must be central in these evaluations. Lyons (in Clandinin 2007:626) suggests that narrative enquiries have an important role in policy deliberations particularly through research agendas. Indeed, Lyons sees that some of the complex issues of contexts, history, culture and of individual students as learners may be addressed through narrative research.

The validity of narrative research can be established by explaining how researchers have realized their values and how this realization has given meaning to their lives (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006: 100). Hence new criteria such as the experienced realization of one's values, can replace traditional technical rational criteria such as generalizability and replicability, which are inappropriate for judging practitioners' living inquiries (McNiff in Clandinin 2007:320).

There are many stories available about how practitioner researchers have overcome obstacles to realize their educational values and celebrate their questions as they generate their living educational theories.²

These accounts contain some significant features:

- Practitioners take as their guideline the question, "How do I improve what I am doing?"
- They explain how they are also contributing to new theory by showing how learning from practice and systematic reflection on the learning can inform practices
- The stories explain how practitioners can become part of networked learning communities and so test their claims to improved practice and knowledge against critical feedback of informed others.

In direct parallel to this, this research can be seen as partly a narrative, a story of how I bring my values (as the researcher) into my practice and resultant research; and also a story about how the consultants who were interviewed also bring their own values to practice. I conclude with my personal reflection of my learning through this journey.

From the lessons learnt it can be said that those who act with deliberate social

² Eames, K. (1995). How do I, as a teacher and educational action-researcher, describe and explain the nature of my professional knowledge? PhD thesis dissertation, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from www.actionresearch.net/kevin.shtml

Laidlaw, M (1996). How can I create my own living educational theory as I offer you an account of my educational development? PhD thesis, University of Bath, Bath, UK. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from www.actionresearch.net/moira2.shtml

intent are involved in practice. Furthermore, if our commitment is to social improvement, we can say we are involved in praxis. In Groome's terms, we become participants in communities of praxis, I have been looking for commonalities in deliberate practice and with Groome's notion my interest also looks at commonalities across practice, indeed whether there are communities of practice (Wenger 2002).

The Presentation of this Thesis

The following chapters are presented within an Action Learning Framework, because this is a framework that I believe best describes my approach to attempting to 'make sense' of my work over the past 40 years. By Action Learning I mean a continuous spiral process of *experiencing- reflecting- conceptualising/generalising/learning- applying/planning* (Kolb 1984). I have used this framework to develop my understanding of what are the major influences upon my life and how I have become the practitioner and researcher that I am today. This is also a preferred process for international development training (Burkett & Kelly 2004), as a lifelong approach to learning that has no defined end. It is also found in the research interviews which confirm the appropriateness of such a framework.

My own narrative is a result of my experiences in community development practice. For example, I have learnt through reflection that, from a management perspective there is a need to give community workers 'space'; that is time to reflect in order to develop their practice. To create this space there is a need to develop structures (planning, teams, locations) and for legitimacy, the work needs to be supervised from a theoretical base. Yes I believe there is a *methodology* or *pattern* to this work. This is why I explicitly look for methodologies and patterns of work in this research.

Within the discipline of community development, notions of 'engagement' and 'social sustainability' are particularly relevant for this research, because they are often used to refer to processes whereby community members are *consulted* over what they want in their communities, e.g. at the local government level. This is a process they understood as reflecting together, which should in turn build relationships for planning and learning together. Consequently for many of the people who have been consulted, the word 'consultation' suggests that their opinions will be taken into account and reflected upon in the decisions that are finally made. However, often following this experience of 'consultation', other people, usually bureaucrats, decide what is needed and implement the proposals, which can be contrary to the expectations of those involved. These 'consultations' are often interpreted by senior bureaucrats and some practitioners, as meaning that social sustainability processes have been

fostered. Yet this consultation has not been a process whereby people have been engaged and then involved meaningfully in their daily lives. Community development practitioners often experience the dilemmas of this type of situation. As a result, they may feel they have let people down and there having been a lack of clarity in roles and relationships.³

As a consequence of this type of common situation, the, the main emphasis of this research is to look closely at relationships and how they are formed; for example in chapter 4 I look at how and why the building of relationships could be taken for granted; then in chapter 5 I look at what is meant by 'understanding the other' (Levinas in Bergo 1998:74) and what is to be considered by building 'dialogue' between people (Gerard & Teurfs 1995:145–153). I then explore the micro level of people involvement, seeking to discover what is the nature of positive social processes in which people become involved and then enjoy taking part in order to make some change in their lives. I seek to clarify how all these processes can be made sustainable (See section 'Social Sustainability and Doing Good' in this chapter).

I want to achieve this because I believe that I have invested many years (almost 40) in working with people. However, my observation about community engagement in today's setting indicates that people generally and even community practitioners do not think at this micro level – they think in general terms and do not take responsibility for actually engaging and respecting other people's views, aspirations and ideas, with the aim of creating a better life. I observe what I believe, from my perspective and values, to be senseless activity in the world on a daily basis.

However, from where do I draw this notion of 'senselessness'? What values drive this judgment? Well, as mentioned earlier, it is about my background in sociology and before that my interest in history and geography and British Constitution and to an extent also economics. From the British Constitution I developed my ideas on values of what constitutes democracy. History showed me the value of understanding the past and how it as developed into the present. Then there was geography which gave me other values, insight and understanding of the environment. Economics, which had an understandably dry reputation as 'the painful elaboration of the obvious', (personal communication from my economics teacher, Brady J in 1966), helped me to develop an idea of modern capitalism and the rationale behind it.

³ These dilemmas were identified by Community Development and Funding Officers in their community development training with Tony Kelly. They felt a clash between the expectations of their superiors and the good will provided by members of the community, who believed they were determining priorities of programme orientation and location.

Sociology provided me a way forward as to how all these disciplines interact with one another and hence my interest in systems thinking. Many things have influenced my values but no less than through my own parents, for example I can clearly recall being encouraged to read the book entitled '*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*' (Tressell 1993) which was a very readable 18th century story of humanity, freedom and doing good. It provided me with an analysis of the negative aspects of capitalism, with the promise that socialism could offer social benefits for the workers.

Something else which is important to me is a 'sense of place'. I grew up in a village which is still important to me today. For me the notion of place does not have much meaning without being associated with and involving people. I can still today visit my village called Englefield Green in southern England - where I can still meet people I know even after 30 years of living away. The local church, in my place, was built by my great, great grandfather and the surrounding cemetery carries the history of many of my family members in its grave stones. As a consequence, the village provides me with many messages that I do not receive in unfamiliar surroundings, I feel at home. It is a sense of place.

So in summary, I am a social scientist who reflects upon his experience and qualifications in sociology, social work and community work. My story began in the United Kingdom with graduate studies into sociology and later social work – which led me to a knowledge and experience base in systems theory, patterns of people behaviour, history and certain values.

For me my background and resultant values are important, this has led me to ask questions in this research about practitioner values.

Australian Experience

I arrived in Australia in 1974, joining the Probation & Parole Service - first in Sydney, New South Wales, and then in Perth, Western Australia. In both locations I set up local reporting centres for clients - as I could see the greater relevance for local centres and in me meeting clients in their own locality rather than in some austere large building at a distance. My own sense of place is important here, as it is useful as a point of reference to understand the other person's world and to overcome the commonly experienced worker difficulty of joining in a new relationship.

My interest in community work had begun earlier with my involvement at university in the RAG (charity appeal 1970) and also in sociology that I was studying at the time. However, my developing interest in the potential of

people to change continued and became highlighted first in my staff training and development activities, both in New South Wales and Western Australia, and then more particularly in my growing inclination towards working with the poor and disadvantaged in society, around the mid-1970s in Australia.

My learning continued commencing to study social work in 1978, whilst still a Probation and Parole Officer in Perth, Western Australia. However, I found limitations in working as a traditional caseworker and consequently developed an alternative group work programme for offenders. My work was perplexing, being informed by colleagues that my Aboriginal clients were mainly illiterate – yet finding that they often spoke a number of languages, whilst I only spoke English. It is a common dilemma for workers who have become involved in social work in order to ‘do good’, as indeed I had, the dilemma arising from contradictions in expectations between the worker and a client group. I develop this theme further in chapter 5 on values, where I explore the imposition of worker values and how to identify how this process happens (Flyvberg 2001:162).

The final part of my social work studies was a placement in the Kimberley in North West Australia, which I chose for its orientation to community work. At the end of this placement, my approach to work began to move/change faster away from traditional casework. Within 2 months of finishing that placement, the Probation and Parole Service asked me to open its new service in the Kimberley.

The Kimberley is an area the size of France with huge distances to cover. Fortunately I had already developed some contacts across the area during my earlier social work placement. Traditional work was obviously not applicable. I had to reflect and learn what actually worked in this new situation. My background and orientation told me that in order to keep my clients (local Aboriginal offenders) out of trouble and away from situations in which they may be judged to have broken the ‘law’, they needed to live in a meaningful social environment, where social pressures relevant to them could reduce them being involved in what was considered to be ‘anti-social behaviour’.

In some ways this was a clear introduction to community work, as for the first time I could feel the tension of working between two systems - the Government and the Aboriginal People. The Government was expecting me to build up the service, i.e. get more and more cases and justify employing more staff, whilst I saw my job as trying to reduce the impact of the white system upon the Aboriginal Offenders and not have them on my caseload, in some net widening process. This is an example of a common challenge for

community workers as they feel the contradictions and tensions of meeting the expectations of their employers against the needs of the community, who they see as their client group. Kelly & Sewell (1988:82) clearly identify this in their community work model and stress the tension felt by the worker, as they act as a broker in the situation.

The strategy that I developed was to get offenders away from the town setting where they were easily seen by police and into areas where uncle figures could keep an eye on them – in a more familiar relationship system. Uncle figures were the traditional authority figures, however, each person was different and considerable enquiries were needed to find the appropriate figure for each offender. Of course getting to know a new setting, with stakeholders, history and relationships, is a problem faced by all community development workers. McCauley (1990) provides a framework for what he calls ‘picture building’, which is a tool for developing an understanding of all these facets in a new setting.

Hence I became the broker between the white (European) and black (Aboriginal) systems. It meant that it was as important to continually talk with meaningful people in the community as it was to just see (supervise) the offender, because to make the process work it was about reinforcing the social structural forces and reinforcing legitimate Aboriginal community structures. I had to ask who the traditional figures in authority were. As a consequence of this process, when I visited Aboriginal communities, I would not just see the client, but also the meaningful figures, both in relation to the client and also to the community. It quickly became obvious that very little in Aboriginal communities was confidential and the public nature of information itself was a reinforcing system. This is another contradiction often experienced, because Western social work requires workers to abide by processes of confidentiality, yet it can often work against people, further isolating them from needed support networks. My networking, as long as it was seen to be in the interests of the community, continued to work in my absence.

In all this I could understand there was a clash of two cultures, see the need to understand what the two worlds looked like and I tried to reduce the suffering of those experiencing apparently meaningless processes. Meanwhile, colleagues from my own agency were surprised that in all this and despite being a white authority figure, I had not suffered huge arguments or antagonistic situations, being an apparent outsider not from the geographic area, yet an authority figure in terms of being a parole officer. They thought I would be vulnerable to individuals who wanted to challenge authority figures. The conclusion that I drew was that I was saved from antagonism because I had developed very good relationships with

those I worked with – whether a colleague or client. So as my practice developed I particularly noticed the importance of relationships both to others in their daily lives but also in the effectiveness of my own practice.

Next I took a break, to study and reflect.

Formal Reflection on Practice

One of the best times of my life was studying for my Master's degree at Bradford University in the United Kingdom (1984-85). It was a time of meeting people from around the world who, like me were taking time out to reflect upon their practice and their work experience to see what they had learned and plan what they would like to do with this insight and knowledge for their future.

During that time I visited community practitioners in the United Kingdom. The City of Liverpool was of particular interest, where the previous year they had experienced the Toxteth Riots. Toxteth was reported to have had very little going for it, as it was full of poverty. I interviewed a number of people about their experience. They told me that at the height of the riots nobody, including the police could get into the Toxteth suburb and the only exceptions were the Probation Officers - because of the *trust* they had built up with the people there. It was the Probation Officers who had shown a willingness to work in the community, to create activities, e.g. youth work, as their *relationships* were sound. Amongst all the *poverty*, *relationships were again very important*.

This then highlighted for me my already aroused interest in the place of relationships in community practice which is reinforced by Burkett & Kelly (2004) who see the building of relationships to be at the heart of developmental work. The highly emotionally charged situations such as Toxteth are identified by Thomas (1983:19) who concludes that “social change is affected through the analysis of social situations and the forming of relationships to bring about some desirable change”. Both studies work.

Also during this time of study, somebody who particularly impressed me was Mike Cooper, an assistant director in the Yorkshire County social services. He had used his position to affect the structure of service delivery (Hadley & McGrath 1984). What he had done was to develop ‘patch’ offices, whereby staff from social services could deliver their services from local offices resulting in a greater knowledge of the local community. By placing staff physically close to the population they were forced into closer relationships. Just as I had noticed that in Western Australia workers in country towns worked differently to those in metropolitan areas, which

appeared to be due to them meeting people on a daily basis in various locations. They were forced into face-to-face situations from which relationships developed. This is very different to cities, where workers can live a long way from where they work and so the relationships may become separated between work and social life with the result that understandings and relationships have fewer opportunities to develop.

Whilst in England, Mike Cooper, by creating the structures, both in terms of physical location and staff groupings, had given the staff the space (or time) and greater opportunity, to develop stronger working relationships. This again reinforced my previous observation of how 'welfare' (i.e. social services) staff in the Kimberley was working. Their supervisor had told me that he knew they were working in locations with the communities in Broome, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing, but he did not understand what they were doing. He knew they were doing what was called community work but did not know what to look for in their work, or what to say in exploration of their work. Yet he believed that they were being effective and had close relationships with the community. Indeed, the Kimberley 'welfare' (as they were known) had a rich tradition of community practice, which had been made known to me prior to commencing in the Kimberley (personal communication with my social work placement supervisor Dr Fran Crawford, September 1977).

Return to Practice

I returned from the United Kingdom to the Kimberley and was appointed as the local manager of the 'welfare' department. When I became manager, I decided to authenticate the effective work that was occurring. I asked myself what was behind this way of working. Was it something about the values, the authenticity of the workers, or their relationships? I was not sure. I enthusiastically followed what I had learnt in my studies, having completed my thesis entitled 'Towards Appropriate Social Work', which was heavily influenced by the United Kingdom trend towards Community Social Work (NISW 1982). I had also learnt in the United Kingdom that community work was not seen by agencies as being the 'real' work, with the consequence that workers felt undervalued yet know that they were achieving positive results. My earlier discussion with the Kimberley supervisor had confirmed this lack of understanding by management about the community work. Hence, as a new manager, I saw my task as authenticating the good community work that was already happening and wherever I could, to introduce processes that would support it.

Building upon my previous seven years of experience in the location, as the

new manager of staff in the Department for Community Welfare, I strove to 'make sense' for sound supervision and to develop tools and understanding for staff to facilitate their effectiveness (such as a supervision sheet [Appendix 1]). I observed that staff were doing other things than pure traditional casework⁴ - though casework was the legitimate work of the mainstream Department, but it didn't seem to fit or be easily applicable in this remote, particularly Aboriginal area.

Consequently, another way of working was required. For example; child protection work needed to be not just about taking away neglected children - as had happened in the past. A more systems-based approach would allow for reflecting in a different way. With the aid of the few other agencies in town, such as the police and health workers, we began to discuss the families who had children at high risk and then considered alternative agency-based approaches. We considered all the factors affecting these families' lives. At meetings decisions would be made about joint action over the larger social issues affecting the client group in the community e.g. considering how to address associated issues that were affecting the wellbeing of the children. These included the payment of water bills for communities, issues arising from environmental health, funding issues, local government issues and social security delivery. So through using systems thinking we looked wider than the individual child - having first ensured that the child would be safe. This is the classic community development strategy of 'think local - act global', a remark which is originally attributed to Geddes (1915). This sense-making through the use of systems' thinking encourages flexibility and alternatives to be considered, through widening the context within which work is occurring.

As part of this strategy, I project managed a research programme, interviewing key stakeholders over a 12 month period, to develop a framework entitled Child Welfare in Remote Aboriginal Communities (Department for Community Services 1989), which was an alternative to the usual Western social work approach. This was another attempt at 'making sense' whereby I chaired an all Aboriginal working group, which sought to develop material to inform and train staff for more effective work in this cross cultural setting. Similarly, I became involved in a 'Failure to Thrive Project' (that is exploring why babies do not gain sufficient weight over a period of time (Princess Margaret Research Foundation 1987)).

This project applied to both Aboriginal and European babies, as both were affected in the geographic area under investigation. It was an action learning approach, to improve practice as the research developed. These frameworks

⁴ Social work involving direct considerations of the problems, needs and adjustments of the individual (case or family) [Merriam Webster Dictionary 2012]

were developed as conceptual tools to identify for the human services industry, what was happening and what actually worked.

At the same time as implementing lessons learnt earlier in the UK, I developed a structural approach to staff supervision to legitimise what they were informally doing. Having 48 staff, I began to review all their work and introduced the expectation that all would have community projects, and that these each had plans that were action oriented. Then to reinforce this more planned and integrated approach, I saw the need to introduce a staffing level of team leaders for each office in the Kimberley and the organisational structure to make this work. Previously, all staff were directly responsible to me despite the geographic distances between my location and theirs. I believed that this would create structures for responsibility to carry out work more effectively.

The identified community projects were reviewed every 3 months by groups of office staff together with me as facilitator. Often these projects involved new Aboriginal outstations, facilitating supplies, community meetings, follow up with Aboriginal Affairs. Projects also included youth work, women's groups and interest groups.

So the structure was there; staff had their community work accepted as legitimate. In order to make the description of the work clearer, I banned the term 'liaison' in describing their community work as being too vague and instead asking the question m- 'liaison to do what?' By asking these direct questions about the behaviour that staff intended to follow, I sought to clarify with them what they were trying to achieve and exactly how they would go about it.

This is the stage that Tony Kelly, community work lecturer at the University of Queensland became engaged by the Department as a trainer/consultant. He offered a Ghandian approach to community work which introduced a methodology as a way of doing community work. I invited him to work with staff in the West Kimberley and with community groups. With his input, it became possible for staff to explain in terms of methodology what they were actually doing and why. He returned many times to the West Kimberley. I accepted a number of his students from Queensland on social work placement and they could name their practice methodology and justify it. This was exciting- they could explain what they were doing, how and why.

Not long after this, I was appointed in charge of the Department's Community Work training. With Tony Kelly's help we looked at structurally authenticating community practice as a way of working, across the whole

department. We managed to draw up and have accepted a training programme at all levels of the Department from Directors, to Managers, to field staff and to specialist staff.

- For field staff the training was about how to do community work.
- For team leaders it was about how to supervise community work.
- For Managers it was about how to create the structures for community work to take place.

This training programme development provided the opportunity to explore the community practice frameworks for management, supervision and carrying out other community activities. But what was my own community work practice framework that drove my thinking?

“SPACE –STRUCTURES – VALUES”

As mentioned earlier, in the process of developing a framework for the supervision of staff the following reflective questions always arose:

- How are they doing their work?
- How can I supervise their practice and judge if it is effective?
- What theory and preferred practice should they be using?

In community development practice, as confirmed in my observations of experienced community practitioners like Cooper, I have learnt that, from a management perspective, there is a need to give community workers ‘space’ in order to carry out their practice. This ‘space’ comprises a number of factors – but not least of all is sufficient time to do their work, to reflect, analyse, learn and act upon the best way of doing their work through understanding the factors affecting the people with whom they are working. To achieve this, the creation of some work structures can be helpful (e.g. planning processes, team creation, and correct locations) and, for the work’s legitimacy, it needs to be supervised from a theoretical base. Yes I do believe there is a systematic process to this work and the above aspects are all part of a successful process, because I have observed how working in a certain way can develop good relationships and mutual benefit being experienced by the participants.

Consequently, all these considerations have resulted in my interest into how organisational structures affect community practice.

These observations led me to become interested in the Australian national work competencies industrial reforms, where I was accepted as the National State and Federal Employers' representative on the Health and Community Services Industries' National Committee, responsible for identifying that industry's relevant community work competencies. My four years' experience in that process led me on a path of deciphering how to develop relevant and *contextually* driven practice, which is a practice which is responsive and sensitive to the situations where it is occurring. It is responsive because the worker reflects upon what is the best way to carry out the work taking into account their own past experience and all the factors that are occurring now and likely to occur into the future, in the situation.

In addition, I had also observed that where practices were the strongest, there seemed to be a core of the associated values in those involved – whether in staff or managers. Achievements (or *action orientation*) was greatest where *opportunities* were created (that is where there was sufficient space) and where there was a strong *values*' base close to the hearts of key workers. Indeed it became my opinion that people's values are probably the most important part of the process, because everything else can collapse or weaken when there is not the commitment through values to fall back upon.

So in conclusion, from a management perspective I think it is important for there be clear *supervision*, enabling *structures* and enough *space* to be created for the worker to deliver good work. The turbo booster for this process is added by *values*, the details of which I explore in chapter 5.

What do I mean by values? What are these values? For me the values are about doing 'good', making life better for people and making life more sustainable.

Social Sustainability and Doing 'Good'.

In this project I find it necessary to clarify what is meant by the term 'good', in terms of the good life. In this clarification, I interchange this term by using social sustainability as a description and explore what that means in the context of this research. These terms all help to develop my research questions on values and ethics in community practice.

Whilst the major focus of my thesis research is more specifically upon the practice of community development professionals, employed by different agencies and businesses, to "build" or "create" or "strengthen" communities – in regions, within organisations, etc.; they all talk of doing good in terms of social sustainability.

What has community development got to do with sustainability? The term 'social' as it relates to sustainability is an interesting one as it has usually been discussed through notions of the 'triple bottom line' by which is meant the economic, ecological and social. The discussion and emphasis has been primarily driven by the first two and only inferred the inclusion of the social. However, there is now recognition that community processes are vital for achieving ecologically sustainable economic development; for example through utilising the term 'social capital', Putnam (2000) marshals an impressive amount of material showing a growing body of research suggesting that where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighbourhoods and even nations prosper. In all this 'sustainability' is not ultimately a technical notion, but a moral one, involving some conception of the 'common good', of right relationships between human and natural communities.

The specific focus of my research is on the practice of community development practitioners and the goals, values, skills and resources that they use in working with different communities. Does this then combine in some commonality to suggest there is a methodology to this work? Indeed is there a Community of Practice that can be identified for building communities in which people are happy and experience 'the good life'? However there needs to be caution this approach for at the same there is a tendency to reify a framework as 'the' way to work. Flyvberg (2001), Schon (1983) and Ife (1995) all indicate the perils of this tendency and the need to use more of an art form as a way of working.

So what is meant by the term 'sustainability' in the context I am using it? I use it as a qualifier for all the aspects which contribute to *happiness* and the *good life* in today's economic growth and consumer oriented society. These all inform my current work in the development of 'Super Towns', which is a government programme in Western Australia geared to encouraging and planning the doubling of population in identified regional towns, including what is needed for housing, jobs and services and what people believe they need to fulfil themselves as human beings.

Who Am I In This Thesis?

In this research I am representing and building upon my own community development framework. In asking the question 'Who am I in this thesis?' I am acknowledging a central focus on values which brings with it the importance of understanding the individual worker/ practitioner as a whole person in their practice. Hence whilst I do ask those interviewed to reflect

upon who they are, it is also important for me too to clarify who I am in this research. Hence the content of this current chapter is created.

Consequently in this chapter I have reflected upon my experiences, major influences and the resultant conclusions that I have drawn about community practice. These all led to this research and the gathering of data from experienced practitioners together with lessons from relevant literature in a search for new knowledge as highlighted in the next chapter.

The resultant research seeks to explore the processes of engagement, building relationships and having certain values as being important for effective community work practice.

Chapters of this thesis

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

This chapter clarifies the research questions and the chosen research methodology of bricolage. It also explains how the thesis is presented in an action learning framework, which is in keeping with the observations made in chapter 1.

Chapter 2 also looks at the development process of the interview questions and provides background data on the practitioners selected for the research.

Chapter 3: The Importance of Building Relationships

Those interviewed identified that relationships and relationship building are central to their practice. This chapter then explores how the practitioners who were interviewed talked about the importance of relationships. In doing so a search for key aspects and concepts of relationship building practice is carried out, together with highlighting what those interviewed believed to be useful in carrying out this part of their practice.

Chapter 4: Joining & Engagement

This chapter provides an analysis of the moment of encounter and engagement which is so central to the already identified priority of relationship building in community development practice. Social science is revisited for its responsibility to analyse social interactions and produce training material for practice development. The language of dialogue is explored as is the concept of complementary relationships and the language of understanding the 'other' in the moment of the relationship – the encounter. Some time is

spent exploring this encounter; in what happens to the self and the other as they experience the sometimes brief moment of feeling a joining in a common space. Finally, to exemplify the practice of community development in relationship building, a way forward for workers from the moment of relationship is suggested through using the heuristic work of Paulo Freire (1997).

Chapter 5: Values and Ethics for Change in Community Development

This chapter is an exploration, informed from my own perspective, of what values and ethics are desirable to achieve a good society through good community practice. It explores what individual community development workers see that motivates them, in order to satisfy their sense of self. The impetus behind this chapter is not just from my own experience, but is driven by all those who were interviewed for this research and who identified that to be effective in their work they needed to have a strong sense of self and some clarity on relevant values. Many of these values are relayed by way of stories.

Chapter 6: Practitioners and Making Sense Of Community Practice.

This chapter is about developing community practice frameworks that facilitate the building of relationships, from the identified values perspective.

This chapter first explores what the practitioners who were interviewed say about the frameworks they identify in their interviews as to how they make sense of their practice. This making sense process is then pursued in the literature to see what writers say of how they rationalise the meaning of community development as a practice. Using this combined information, a new framework is developed for understanding the strengths and weaknesses in practice. A short section follows on identifying who are these people called community development practitioners; before a framework for improving practice is developed and explained.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The concluding chapter draws together the lessons and knowledge developed in the research, through the frameworks that have been identified.

The potential of a community of practice is presented as too are what are considered the contributions to knowledge from this research and the implications for further research.

Chapter 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this chapter is to describe the research journey for this thesis. However, following on from the first chapter, this chapter also explains how the thesis follows an action learning framework as the wider framework for presenting the thesis to accurately reflect my perception of how I learn and develop my own practice.

The chapter commences with a clarification of the knowledge sought in the research and then then a discussion of the chosen research methodology of bricolage, including a justification of its use and the why literature has been utilised in the way that it has. There is a discussion on the processes that were used to ensure validity of the data produced, including the criteria against which to judge them, the process for analysis and the testing of data through presentations with peers. Most importantly there is also an account of how the practitioners were chosen for interviews; who they were and what was the nature of the questions developed to seek the data for the research.

Provisional Claim to Knowledge

This research seeks to uncover through interviews with community development practitioners, input from my own practice and analysis from relevant literature, a contribution of new knowledge that will result in community development practice becoming more successful and purposeful in its approach through an understanding of the micro practices involved in community development. The aim is therefore to ‘improve’ knowledge generally about effective community development practice which could offer insight both to other practitioners as well as to myself in order to improve our practice.

My claim to this new knowledge is supported by me being a scholar who claims some mastery in the knowledge of schools of sustainability, particularly that related to the human services and to community development practice. I also make this claim from my sociological background which together with my Master’s studies in community work, trained me to identify patterns of social/human behaviour. The values which

influence my observations come from the rich tradition of community work and Gandhian associated approaches, whilst my sociological orientation is affected by both Marxism and socialism.

My search for these patterns of behaviour is also a search for good practice which may even lead to identifying some 'communities of practice' (Wenger et al 2002). This search is influenced by my experience of training and believing that methods of work can be effective and identified. In addition, I believe that these methods of work are particularly influenced by the practitioner's whole person – their individuality and spirituality. However, not believing that positivism⁵ is the best epistemological stance for this enquiry. I realise that community development practice needs to be flexible and relevant for each unique community it is working with hence my decision to use bricolage research methodology.

Consequently an aim of this research is to find out if scholars and practitioners can identify some patterns of how to work effectively with communities. The findings might then describe some different but successful ways of working which contribute towards building strong communities.

The first chapter of this thesis has already provided some description of the experiences I have had as a practitioner. The discussion contained in that chapter leads naturally to the general question that I ask in this research and can be seen to drive the research:

What can be learned from how community development practitioners conceptualise their work and their development as practitioners?

In this research, through a process of questioning, I aim to explore:

- The ways community development practitioners do their community building.
- How they conceptualise the development of their practice.
- What influences, theories, frameworks and philosophies underlie their practices.
- How these contrast with theories, frameworks etc. in the literature.

The associated questions are asked through a framework of action learning, whereby I reflect upon my own experience and those I interview to uncover whether there is a method to this community practice which is important

⁵ Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the methods of the natural sciences (Bryman 2008:13) and includes certain principles e.g. science must be value free; knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts; there is a clear distinction between scientific statements and normative statements

and, if so, in what form it might be useful. I search to find out if practitioners have any concepts or processes in common which I can decipher from lengthy interviews with them. Indeed I seek for any commonalities in practice.

The ultimate aim of this research is to reveal new knowledge deriving directly from the two specific research questions:

1. How do community development practitioners understand the relational and micro-level dimensions of their practice?

This I explore in chapter 3 'The Importance of Building Relationships' and in chapter 4 entitled 'Joining and Engagement – Micro Practice in Community Development'.

2. What values, ethics and frameworks guide practitioners' practice?

This issue is explored in chapter 5 'Values and Ethics for Change In Community Development' and chapter 6 entitled 'Practitioners and Making Sense of Their Practice'.

Action Learning and Action Research

It has already been mentioned that I believe in the use of action-learning to make sense of my practice. This has resulted in me using an action learning framework in my presentation of this thesis. It is particularly useful for me as I often introduce my own experiences in support of some observations about practice. Consequently it is worth spending some time explaining further the rationale that I see for using this framework and what is meant by 'action learning'. However, it should be stressed that this is not the methodology of this research, which is bricolage and is elaborated in this chapter.

Action learning is a sub group of the Action Research family (McNiff and Whitehead 2011:10). According to McNiff and Whitehead (2011:12), the main groupings of action research have given rise to further sub groups, hence although she provides a guide to these groupings she also admits that 'the situation' [of group development] continues to change rapidly.

Because of this derivation, there needs to be a brief overview of action research from which action learning derives, in order to provide some context and outline of the principles involved.

According to Brydon-Miller et al (2003:11) *‘action research challenges the claims of a positivistic view of knowledge which holds that in order to be credible, research must remain objective and value free [...] action research [...] embraces the notion of knowledge as socially constructed and recognizes that all research is embedded within a system of values and promotes some model of human interaction – which commits to a form of research which challenges unjust and undemocratic economic, social and political systems and practices.’*

This orientation is reinforced by Stringer (1999:38) who qualifies these terms and believes that community-based action research is characterised by a set of values that pursue processes of enquiry which are:

1. Democratic – enabling the participation of all people
2. Equitable –acknowledging people’s equity of worth
3. Liberating – providing freedom from oppressive debilitating conditions
4. Life enhancing – enabling the expression of people’s full potential

Minichiello et al (2004:169) similarly see the theoretical underpinning of action research lying in concepts of emancipation and empowerment, whilst Reason and Bradbury (2001:2-4) identify the influences of Marxism, experiential learning and the liberating perspectives of awareness of gender and race.

Action research itself has a long history and one often associated with the work of Kurt Lewin, (Lewin 1946:34-36) who viewed action research as a cyclical, dynamic, and collaborative process in which people addressed social issues affecting their lives. Through cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, participants used action research to address problems of assimilation, segregation, and discrimination, assisting people to resolve issues, initiate change, and study the impact of those changes (Lewin, 1938:316-319, Lewin & Lewin, 1942:7-11).

For Stringer & Dwyer (2005:5) action research also constitutes a cycle which is: Designing – Collecting Data – Analysing Data – Communicating Outcomes – Taking Action; this last ‘taking action’ (Stringer & Dwyer 2005:9) is identified as consisting of basic research *plus action*. This is echoed by Punch (2009:136), who also notes the bringing together of action and research, whilst noting the cyclical nature of the process in research producing outcomes which produce more questions and further outcomes.

The strength of action research is identified by Reason and Bradbury

(2001:25) as not just about “doing good” but it is also about doing things well, in a collaborative relationship with relevant stakeholders. However, the weakness of action research, and what reduces its methodological relevance for this research is its localism and difficulty in intervening in large scale social change efforts. The bulk of action research takes place on a case by case basis, often doing great good in a local situation but then failing to extend beyond that local context.

Action Learning

Whilst action learning is sometimes mentioned as if it is the same as action research and the two do share some features, however they are different. Action learning is far more similar to ‘practitioner research’, as identified by Stringer & Dwyer (2005:3) and Punch (2009:137) who suggest that action research might be distinguished from what they call practitioner research. They suggest that when practitioners stand back from their clients and use a variety of small experiments or surveys, engage in observations, or apply reflective analysis to obtain objective, factual information related to their intervention or service delivery strategies, they are doing practitioner research. This is in comparison to when they engage in collaborative processes of inquiry that incorporate the views, perspectives and experiences of their clients, with the intent of solving a problem related to programme or service delivery practices, where they are then doing action research.

This differentiation between action research and practitioner research introduces a crucial aspect whereby ‘practitioner research’ appears to better suit the outcome sought in this study because a particular emphasis is that lessons are learnt from the process that does not just offer altering practice, but that lessons can be learned to inform practice for future occasions.

With action research, Stringer and Dwyer (2005) do not suggest that the practitioner learns from the process, in order to improve his/her practice, as this is more the approach in practitioner research. Whilst there is a strong similarity between practitioner research and action research; with practitioner research, practitioners are helped to become more explicit about their intentions and their strategies to achieve them.

As can be seen in the below definition of action learning provided by Skippington, practitioner researcher is very similar to action learning:

‘Action learning is a systematic process through which individuals learn by doing. Through the process, people increase their self-awareness and develop new knowledge, attitudes and behaviours as well as skills for making changes and defining their roles and responsibilities within new or

changing workplace contexts.' Skippington (2002:25)

According to Marsick & O'Neil (1999:175), action learning often assists people to become more conscious, not only of driving forces in themselves, but also of the institutions that shape their actions. This means that they have greater knowledge to inform and influence their future actions, so that they may take more informed steps to influence future directions, in line with the democratic, equitable, liberating and life enhancing values outlined by Stringer (1999:38).

Reg Revans is attributed as being the originator of action learning and states (Revans 1982:627), that through action learning...*'the learning achieved is not so much an acquaintance with new factual knowledge or technical art conveyed by some authority such as an expert or teacher, but through interpretation of the subject's existing knowledge, including his recollections of past lived experiences.'* Indeed, Revans said that "learning by doing" may be a simpler definition of action learning.

Many proponents of action learning see Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb 1984:38-41), as the theoretical learning base. Kolb's cycle emphasised the cognitive and whole person dimension of taking in information (through concrete experience and abstract conceptualisation) and then transforming the information learned into knowledge through learning (which was a process of active experimentation and reflective observation). Kolb's cycle emphasised first experiencing something (or bringing it to mind via a simulation of experience), then reflecting on that experience and sharing perceptions of this experience before next checking these perceptions against theory that would help to explain what had happened. He then moved to applying what was understood to practice, before experimenting with new ways of thinking and working and being, which in turn generated a new cycle of this kind of learning. Action learning is the enabling factor at each stage of this experiential cycle. As a result, action plus reflection on action produces an increased awareness of how work is done, giving participants and the team more choices for expanding repertoires for working more effectively (Marsick and O'Neil 2007:9).

Action learning as a framework to present this thesis is therefore very relevant to this research. There is the reflective process of learning both from past experience and from knowledge and is a good description of what has happened if the interviews result in learning by the interviewer and the practitioners, indeed this could become a description of the intent of a community of practice, where the interviewer and interviewee create a dialogue clarifying what they have just learnt. Importantly, as a practitioner, I am also adding to my knowledge and skills through this process and the

process makes sense to me.

This process of action learning fits well as a major method in the multi methods used in this research as part of the bricolage methodology.

The Methodology for this Research

Why Bricolage?

In line with my already expressed doubts about the usefulness of positivism in the development of knowledge about the human dimension, bricolage was developed in response to what were seen as the failings in the system of knowledge production, as being bound by scientific procedures. This development came as it was considered that in the name of an *'ethnocentric notion of scientific progress, there was an attempt to keep individuals ignorant of their potentials' [.....] 'This procedure bound science and system of knowledge production, did not do a very good job of addressing questions involving what it means to be human, what it might mean to live in a good and just society, and the worthiness of those who live in cultures and locales different from the West'* (Kincheloe 2004a:22).

These shortfalls are therefore why bricoleurs ascribe such importance to the critical and hermeneutical traditions and their concerns with human questions. They understand that research which fails to address the ontology of the human existential situation with all its pain, suffering, joy and desire is limited in its worth. Bricoleurs therefore search for better ways to connect with and illuminate this domain. (Kincheloe 2005:348).

To do this, bricolage as a methodology highlights the relationship between a researcher's ways of seeing and the social location of his or her personal history. It is the researcher as bricoleur who abandons the quest for some naïve concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his or her position in the web of reality and the social locations of other researchers and the ways they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge (Kincheloe 2004a:2). This focus explains my emphasis in the first chapter in addition to the details provided about the practitioners who were interviewed.

The bricoleur refuses to passively accept externally imposed research methods that tacitly certify modes justifying knowledges that are decontextualized and reductionist (Denzin and Lincoln 2000 in Kincheloe 2004a:3). In hoping this, bricoleurs do accept that there is no final, trans-historical, non-ideological meaning for which they seek to achieve, because

they understand that the research process is subjective and that instead of repressing this subjectivity they attempt to understand its role in shaping enquiry (Kincheloe 2004a:6).

What is Bricolage?

Bricolage results from the qualitative researcher-as-bricoleur using the tools of his or her methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods or empirical materials are at hand (Becker 1998:2 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). The choice of which tools to use and which research practices to employ, is not set in advance. 'The choice of research practices depends upon questions that are asked and the questions depend upon the context' (Nelson et al., 1992:2 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2) then what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting.

Kincheloe (2005:324) reinforces this perspective and adds that bricolage views research methods actively rather than passively, meaning that we actively construct our research methods from tools at hand rather than passively receiving the 'correct' universally applicable methodologies.

Clearly Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) consider bricolage to be more than multi method research. They see it as an approach that enables researchers to respect the complexity of the meaning making and inquiry process. In this way it challenges the basis of traditional multi methods research. For example, a bricoleur challenges the traditional principle that researchers should remain neutral observants in a research context; rather than idolizing the perceived detached neutrality, bricoleurs engage the political dimension of enquiry (Flick 1992:194 in Denzin and Lincoln 1994:2).

For Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2), whilst qualitative research is inherently multi method in focus, the use of multi methods or triangulation in bricolage reflects an attempt to secure an in depth understanding of the phenomenon in question. Because it is acknowledged that objective reality can never be captured, triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation (Fielding and Fielding 1986:33 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood then as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to any investigation (see Flick 1992:194 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). It is through bricolage, that scholars and researchers who adopt the methodology, do so with a recognition that the approach pushes the borders of traditional multi methods qualitative research and addresses the plurality and complex political dimensions of knowledge work (Rogers 2012:17:14).

Through this political engagement, Denzin and Lincoln (1994:3) observe that the bricoleur understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity and those of the people in the setting. The bricoleur knows that researchers all tell stories about the worlds they have studied. Thus the narratives, or stories scientists tell are accounts couched and framed within specific storytelling traditions, often defined as paradigms (e.g. positivism, post positivism, constructivism).

Five Dimensions of Bricolage

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:4-5), explore how bricolage adds rigour, depth and complexity to the validation process through identifying what they see as five dimensions of bricolage methodology.

Firstly there is methodological bricolage which can be seen as employing numerous data gathering strategies from the interviewing techniques of ethnography, historical research methods, discursive and rhetorical analysis of language, semiotic analysis of signs, phenomenological analysis of consciousness etc. (Kincheloe 2005:335).

So for Denzin and Lincoln the methodological bricoleur can be a researcher who combines multiple research tools to accomplish a meaning making task, the methodological bricoleur could be a researcher who begins an inquiry process with an action research approach and then realizes that discourse analysis could help develop a more complex portrait of the phenomenon.

Then there is interpretive bricolage, which deploys a range of interpretive strategies that emerge from a detailed awareness of the field of hermeneutics and the ability to use the hermeneutic circle (Crotty 1998:98). In this context bricoleurs work to discern their location in the web of reality in relation to intersecting axes of personal history autobiography, race, socio economic class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, geographical place and numerous other dynamics. These various perspectives are used to discern the role of self in the interpretive process. This process is combined with different perspectives offered by people located in diverse locations in the web to widen the hermeneutic circle and to appreciate the diversity of perspectives on a particular topic. These perspectives are viewed in relation to one another and in relation to larger social, cultural, political, economic, psychological and educational structures as well as the social theoretical positions. In this way the complexity and multidimensionality of the interpretive process is comprehended by the

bricoleur (Kincheloe 2005:335). So an interpretive bricoleur is therefore a researcher who understands that research is an interactive process, shaped by his or her own personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those people in the setting (Denzin and Lincoln in Rogers 2012:17:6). This dimension is particularly relevant in the research, where the backgrounds of myself and those interviewed are elaborated, to portray an understanding of the various perspectives.

For Denzin and Lincoln (1999:7 in Rogers 2012:17:7) narrative bricoleurs appreciate that inquiry is a representation (i.e. narrative). Narrative bricoleurs appreciate how ideologies and discourses shape how knowledge is produced. Instead of taking these ideologies for granted they seek to understand their influence on research processes and texts. Narrative bricolage (Kincheloe 2005:336) appreciates the notion that all research knowledge is shaped by the types of stories inquirers tell about their topic. Such story types are not innocently constructed but reflect particular narratological traditions; comedy, tragedy irony. The bricoleur's knowledge of the frequently unconscious narrative formula at work in the representation of the research allows a greater degree of insight into the forces that shape the nature of the knowledge production. Thus more complex and sophisticated research emerges from the bricolage, as is seen in the story telling nature of those interviewed.

Theoretical bricolage (Kincheloe 2005:335) uses a wide knowledge of social theoretical positions from constructivism, critical constructivism, enactivism, feminism, Marxism, neo Marxism, critical theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism and cultural studies...to determine the purposes, meanings and uses of the research act. I have clearly indicated the influences to my theoretical position as too have many of those interviewed.

Finally there is political bricolage, (Kincheloe 2005:335) which understands all research processes hold political implications and are manifestations of power. No science, no mode of knowledge production is free from the inscriptions of power. In this context, bricoleurs study the information they collect and the knowledge they produce to discern the ways tacit forms of power have shaped them. In light of such awareness, bricoleurs attempt to document the effects of ideological power, hegemonic power, discursive power, disciplinary power and coercive power. In this political articulation of the concept, normative foundations are explored and questions of political economy, racism, sexism, etc. are seen to be central concerns of the criticality of knowledge. This aspect is explored in the discussion on ethics and values in chapter 5.

So bricolage in this thesis performs a large number of tasks,

ranging from interviewing to observing, to interpreting personal and historical documents to intensive self-reflection and introspection. The bricoleur reads widely and is knowledgeable about the many interpretive paradigms (feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, constructivism) (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2). He/she can be seen to artistically combine theories, techniques and methods (Kincheloe 2004a:6). The product resulting from the bricoleur's labour is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher's images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis. This bricolage will connect the parts of the whole, stressing the meaningful relationships that operate in the situations of the social worlds studied (Weinstein & Weinstein 1991: 164 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:3).

It is through this process of using bricolage, that bricoleurs gain insight into the social construction of knowledge, understanding, and human subjectivity; they also gain a consciousness of their own and other's historicity. What many researchers have referred to as the crisis of historicity is really nothing more than the development of this consciousness, this understanding of historical, cultural, social, ideological and discursive construction of science and the research it produces (Kincheloe 2005:337).

To carry this out bricolage makes use of philosophical research into the boundary between the social world and the narrative representation of it. Exploring this complex, ever shifting boundary between the social world and the narrative representation of it, philosophically informed bricoleurs begin to document the specific influences of life history, lived context, race, class, gender and sexuality on researchers and the knowledge they produce (Kincheloe 2004a:8).

This philosophical dimension of bricolage helps researchers to understand the ways that meanings in the research process are often imposed by a monologic that undermines the recognition of the multiple forces which are at work in the meaning making process. It is through philosophical enquiry that bricoleurs are helped to appreciate the principles and sources that fuel the production of knowledge by both self and others, a facility necessary for good research and good scholarship in general. The resultant historicization of research allows bricoleurs to ask questions of knowledge production that have previously gone unasked and through this process gain insight into previously invisible processes shaping the ways we describe and act in the world (Kincheloe 2004a:11).

This philosophical enquiry seeks out answers to the most compelling questions of human life e.g. what is the nature of living a good life? In this

ethical domain therefore bricoleurs question the ways that their research contributes to the social good. They want to know how this work influences the lives of the researcher, the community the world? (Kincheloe 2004a:13). Such knowledge empowers us to construct a more equitable, exciting, just and intelligent future and can constitute new knowledge (Kincheloe 2004a:19).

Through facing the diversity of knowledges of multiple pasts and possible futures, bricoleurs transcend reductionist modes of fragmented knowledge production that deny the socially constructed nature of all research. Through the realisation that the way we conduct research is not a given, an immutable process that contains no creative dimension, bricoleurs take seriously our creative responsibility to break the lenses of present ways of viewing the world, creating the space to realise new knowledge.

Bricolage has therefore brought a rigour and depth to this investigation through combining multiple methods, literature, empirical enquiry and the perspective of the observer to justify the claim to knowledge. It has allowed space for the voice of me as the researcher's experience, allowing the data to be nuanced, combining the data from interviews and the experience of the researcher; and in this instance allowing me to elaborate upon 'my observations'. So the space provided by bricolage has accommodated the drawing upon observations, personal experiences, literature and empirical data. So in this move to the margins and transcendence of reductionism, bricolage has allowed me to seek to identify what is absent in particular situations and to understand that there is far more in the world than what we can see (Kincheloe 2004a:20), and hence allows the identification of gaps in literature and empirical data.

Hence I have used bricolage, in terms of multi methods, as interviewing techniques of ethnography, to ensure sensitivity to choice of venue, improve rigour through recording interviews, emphasising learning from the interviewee and being sensitive to understanding the influences upon myself and the interviewee. So in terms of interpretive bricolage I have explored the role of the self to understand and discern its impact upon the research process and through theoretical bricolage have discussed to understand some of my own influences and those of the practitioners interviewed. I have used political bricolage particularly in discussion on 'structuration' (Giddens 1993), which deals with the effects of power and the ideologies responsible for emphasis within organisations and then narrative bricolage in order to understand the influences of ideologies on the research process. Finally, political enquiry has been used to query how the research process contributed to the social good, a phenomenon that has already been noted as a weakness of more positivist approaches (Kincheloe 2004a:22).

How Literature is used in this Thesis

Literature is explored extensively in this thesis, but not in the more traditional sense of a Literature Review chapter. Instead literature is utilised in a true ‘bricolage’ methodology of continuously reflecting upon the literature, together with the experience of the researcher and the narratives from interviews, towards a validation of new knowledge.

I draw from both my and others’ experiences and literature throughout the thesis, integrating it, weaving it in as relevant and entwining the work, reflecting the methodology of bricolage. Through this process of bricolage, it has been possible to identify gaps in literature in relation to certain situations.

Methods

In order to gather the data for this research it was considered necessary to interview identified consultants to elicit what ways of working they found useful in their practice. To do this they had to start talking, or creating a narrative, about their practice.

A narrative is a story created that describes a sequence of fictional or non-fictional events. Stories themselves are of ancient origin, existing in ancient Egyptian, ancient Greek, Chinese and Indian culture. (Jean-Francois Lyotard spends a great deal of time on what he calls ‘traditional knowledge’ in Crome & Williams [eds] 2006:118). In this thesis I use stories to illustrate and create new knowledge about cultural continuity and social inclusion. For general purposes in semiotics and literary theory, a ‘narrative’ is a story or part of a story. It may be spoken, written or imagined and it will have one or more points of view representing some or all of the participants or observers (White & Epstein 1990:78-80. Denzin 1989b:58-60, 77).

In terms of a method employed to elicit these stories in interviews, the use of structured interviews was a possibility. Structured interviews entail the use of an interview schedule by the interviewer and questions are usually very specific offering the interviewee a limited range of answers. It is the typical form for survey research (Bryman 2008:193).

Another type of interview is the unstructured interview, whereby the interviewer has only a list of topics or issues and the phrasing and sequencing of questions vary from interview to interview. This form of interview tends to be used when researchers are concerned that even the rudimentary use of an

interview guide will not allow genuine access to the worldviews of people (Bryman 2008:700).

Finally there are semi-structured interviews, which typically refer to a context where the interviewer has a series of questions that are in general form of a schedule but the interviewer is able to vary the sequence and nature of questions. The questions are typically more general than structured interviews. The interviewer has latitude to ask further questions in response to what are seen to be significant replies. By and large however, all the questions are asked in similar wording for each interview (Bryman 2008:438).

This last type, that is 'semi structured interviews', was chosen for this research for several reasons that suited the data content. Firstly, the research emphasis is upon how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events; that is what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns and forms of behaviour. This emphasis is best facilitated when the researcher has a clear focus, rather than a very general notion of wanting to do research on a topic. Hence semi structured interviews are useful to allow specific issues to be addressed. Semi structured interviewing also allows some qualitative flexibility to ask additional questions, which the structured interview process would not, whilst the unstructured interview was not focussed enough to allow data to be gathered that might meet the focussed research question objective of having information which may contain commonalities for comparison. In discussing what he identifies as 'in depth' qualitative interviews, Bryman (2008:196) elaborates upon how it is beneficial to use some semi structured but also some structured process, to allow for this clarity of focus.

The flexibility in asking additional questions was informed by an analysis being continually undertaken by the interviewer. This analysis involved other methods that informed supplementary questions development, such as theme identification.

The intention of this research was to seek themes and patterns from a breadth of examples and situations. This provided some common themes across interviews, such as the 'sense of self' and reference to the term 'spirit'.

The methods identified for this research were semi structured interviews because they allowed flexible responses in relation to what were considered significant replies. Eliciting stories or narratives was important to start practitioners talking about their practices and was seen to be important from their own perspectives. Then an informed process of identifying themes of practice was important to produce some structure for further analysis.

How The Validity of the Claim was Tested

The standards used to test the validity of this research are those that Curtin University provide for the examiners.

- Does the thesis show the candidate's understanding of the field?
- Does the candidate demonstrate capacity to conceive, plan and conduct a program of research?
- Does the thesis explain the significance of the research to contribute to knowledge in the field of study?
- Does the thesis demonstrate originality of work?
- Has the candidate surveyed literature relevant to the thesis?
- Does the candidate demonstrate adequate skills in gathering and critical analysis of information and report presentation?
- Does the candidate demonstrate the capacity to conceive, design and carry out to completion independent research?
- Does the thesis make substantial, original and significant contribution to the knowledge or understanding of the field of study?

In addition, whilst these are the standards used by Curtin University; I expect, as an action learning practitioner that the following be judged in an analysis as to what has been delivered in this research:

- Are the values of my practice clearly articulated and is there evidence of living towards them in my practice?
- Does my inquiry account lead you to recognise how my understanding and practice has changed over time?
- Are you satisfied that I as a researcher have shown commitment to a continuous process of practice improvement?

What Kind Of Data Were Gathered and How?

The material was recorded during the interviews which lasted between one and two hours. Recording on a digital device allowed easy collection of data and ensured clarity. It also allowed for any correction due to limitations of memory and a thorough examination of what was said. Additionally it permitted repeat examination, was open to public scrutiny and also allowed to counter for any allegations that might arise.

At end of the interviews there was a debrief process between myself and the interviewees, during which it was made clear that anything written about the interview would depend upon the general conclusions I made of the whole group who had been interviewed.

Following the review of the transcription by the participant, a further interview, of approximately one hour, was completed and transcribed to clarify any points arising from the first interview.

The authenticity of the data is shown in the production of transcripts from interview, with consent forms signed by those interviewed. All transcripts are dated. The records of interview are stored on digital recordings and hand transcriptions.

The authenticity of the data was presented to both peers and to my supervisor to judge whether the resulting data sounded true. The supervisor was shown the transcripts and consent forms, having helped to design the required consent forms. The supervisor then had the opportunity to request further feedback from those interviewed, as each was interviewed a second time. This allowed for any clarification from the interviewers questioning but also from those interviewed, having received a copy of the initial transcript.

How Evidence Was Gathered From This Data.

Thematic analysis was used in this research to form a framework for the development of the associated chapters. This was a process for identifying elements of practice across practitioners from the produced transcripts.

Theme identification is one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis and entails what is often referred to as thematic analysis (Bryman 2008:554) or category development (Minichiello 2004:641). This approach is meant to provide a framework for the thematic or categorical analysis of qualitative data and provides a way of thinking about how to manage those themes. However, it does not necessarily tell the user how to identify themes, which is more likely to reflect the analyst's awareness of recurring ideas and topics.

Guba (1978:53) argues that in analysing data a researcher must first deal with the problem of 'convergence' which is figuring out what things fit together, which leads to a classification system for the data. He suggests several steps with the researcher looking for "recurring regularities" in the data. He suggests that if there is much overlapping or unassignable in these categories, then there

is some basic fault in the category system. Guba goes on to look at divergence, where the researcher fleshes out the categories and keeps doing so until no new categories are apparent.

Ryan & Bernard (2003:85-109) in order to identify themes, recommend looking at:

- Repetitions: topics that recur again and again
- Indigenous typologies or categories: local expressions that are either unfamiliar or are used in an unfamiliar way
- Metaphors and analogies: the ways in which participants represent their thoughts in terms of metaphors or analogies (they give the example of people describing their marriages as like the 'Rock of Gibraltar')
- Transition: ways in which topics shift in transcripts and other materials
- Similarities and differences: exploring how interviewees might discuss a topic in different ways or differ from each other in certain ways or exploring whole texts like transcripts and asking how they differ
- Linguistic connectors: examining the use of words like 'because' or 'since', because such terms point to causal connections in the minds of participants
- Missing data: reflecting on what is not in the data by asking questions about what interviewees omit in their answers to questions
- Theory related material: using social scientific concepts as springboards for themes.

Despite Ryan and Bernard's suggestions they do provide some pointers about how to consider data for such an analysis. However, thematic analysis lacks a clearly specified series of procedures (Bryman 2008:555).

Minichiello et al (2004:641) see category development as more of an art form resulting in flexibility in removing, developing, extending, modifying categories as a necessary part of the analytic process with categories often changing as the process becomes clearer as to which fit better. Minichiello et al assert that a category should have a number of elements: a label, a key idea (concept) about which the category is concerned, segments of data and a set of criteria that demarcate the category from other categories. They suggest that a well-developed or dense category will have a number of sub categories.

However, according to Minichiello et al (2004:649), since qualitative analysts do not have statistical tests to tell them when an observation or pattern is significant, they must rely on their own intelligence, experience and

judgement. To provide a guide for the researcher who needs to develop these groupings and categories, Minichiello et al suggest that categories are developed as the researcher is identifying the central story of the study and how all the data, concepts and categories support the story, and hence how the categories relate to each other. So this is a by-product of the main story development. An indication of their validity is whether the links between categories are weak or strong, whether they support one another and in what way are they related.

This identified central story or core theme is the consistent meaning or story that is threaded throughout the data. It is an idea or subject that links numerous concepts and therefore categories together; it is found consistently but can appear in many ways. Causal connections, or linguistic connectors, as identified by Ryan and Bernard (2003:85-109), provide an indicator for this continual process of sense making.

The sense making referred to in this study, directly relates to the relevance of using the bricolage methodology, where continual validation involves judgement on experiences, stories, literature and does not rely solely on triangulation. The central story to which the identified themes apply is the conceptualisation of community development practitioners, and in the context of this research the categories they understand as the relational and micro level dimensions of their practice and the values, ethics and frameworks that guide their practice. These categories or themes become the framework for the following chapters.

Process Leading To A Justified Claim To Knowledge.

The validity of this research has been continually tested through the use of bricolage as the methodology. This use of bricolage has meant, as mentioned earlier, the combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study which is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to any investigation (see Flick 1992:194 in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:2).

In addition, validity has been tested with those who were interviewed being recontacted and reinterviewed for reflection and feedback on what they had said in interview. Supervisors too were used to query and test the validity of the material. I had three different supervisors along the research journey with whom to test the validity of the research and the evidence being generated from the data. At times interview transcripts were emailed to supervisors, prior to supervision appointments, for them to reflect and encourage them to develop in depth questioning.

I tested the validity of the research material for this thesis at presentations and forums.

From my own experience, I began testing my ideas as early as August 1997, which was prior to the research, with a presentation on 'Levels of Community Practice' to future practitioners who were social workers at the University of Western Australia.

The first major presentation was at the International Conference on Sustainability, Stockholm Sweden in June 2007. On that occasion I presented a paper entitled 'Social Sustainability and Doing Good'; in which I reported how I had interviewed practitioners who believed that effective work involved 'listening, respecting and being honest'. I also reported that what they were doing involved 'a sense of cooperative human activity, aiming to achieve 'good'. I elaborated upon what was reported as a sense of 'spirit' or unfolding 'spirituality', plus discussion on the philosophy and values associated with a 'moral space' and the political philosophy of 'doing good'.

The subsequent presentations, with following discussions of my research was both with researchers and peer practitioners.

My next presentation of research data was to local government managers at the Local Government Managers of Australia Conference: A Symposium for the Future – Local Government in 2027, where I developed further on the earlier themes. That presentation on 11th September 2007 was entitled 'Working With Who? Developing Public Policy in Local Government'. This discussed; understanding community and social dynamics, community strengthening, definitions of community, notions of happiness and leadership in local government. It was followed by a workshop which I facilitated and looked at how to create better and happier communities.

Then on 11th December 2007, I presented at the Local Government Managers Conference on Functional Communities, which was targeted at Delivering Services to Remote Aboriginal Communities. My paper was entitled 'Marketing the Social' and discussed social sustainability, models for working with communities, the common good and notions of community government, local governance and citizen governance and happiness all of which are elements of this study and resulting data.

My fourth major presentation was with peers at the Local Government Community Development Officers conference in April 2008, where I delivered a paper on Making Sense of Community Work. This included discussions on levels of practice, understanding the self in practice, practice

models, contextualisation and action/analysis.

This last was a validation exercise with community practitioners and was the sharing of some tools found to be useful in my practice. An indication of the success of my ideas was my immediate appointment to deliver community practitioner training to a shire council community development department. This indicated that the data collected was relevant to some of these practitioners' practices.

All these presentations involved the public delivery of lectures followed by working groups to test and validate the ideas. I had many requests for copies of my papers.

Timescale

The research began with my part time enrolment for this research in early 2004. The Programme of Study was developed during that year and was accepted by the Murdoch University in November 2004.

The process of developing the interview questions began in November 2004 and was completed for Ethics Approval in mid-2005. The first interview was held in October 2005, with the final research interview being held in February 2007.

Validation presentations took place in 2007 and 2008, as in the previous section. The research was then delayed through a change between academic institutions and the search for a content supervisor before commencing the thesis writing process, in late 2009.

Location of Research Interviews

The interviews were conducted in locations to the preference of those being interviewed. The majority chose to be interviewed at their homes, others their offices. Two were interviewed at Perth Airport whilst they were in transit in the transit lounge.

Selection of Practitioner Interviewees

The interviewees were selected for interview using a purposive sampling process. This is a non probability form of sampling, as I did not seek to sample participants on a random basis. The goal of purposive sampling (Patton 1987:52) is to sample cases/participants in a strategic way; so that those

sampled were relevant to the questions being posed and their relevance to understanding social phenomena. The power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research – thus the term “purposeful” sampling.

I needed to be clear in my mind what the criteria were to indicate inclusion or exclusion of candidates. It was to be a single stage, mainly one interview with a follow up interview and not an ongoing process of research. Hence the process of developing the questions was crucial to then deciding which practitioners would match the criteria and understand the social phenomena being researched. Whilst there are several different strategies for purposefully selecting information-rich cases, the logic of each strategy serves a particular purpose, yet the strategies are not mutually exclusive, as the research may serve a variety of purposes more than one sampling strategy may be necessary (Patton 1987:56).

In this case the practitioners were selected from consultants and practitioners who were personally known or recommended by colleagues and experts in the field of community building. When one practitioner became unavailable a further name was selected from names put forward by those already interviewed; leading to a small ‘snowballing’ sample effect. Snowball or chain sampling (Patton 1987:56) is a strategy for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases, or that at least appear on face value to be information rich on the phenomenon of interest. The process begins by asking people in the programme, “Who knows a lot about....? Who should I talk to?” By asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger as new information-rich cases are accumulated. In most programmes or systems, a few key names or incidents are mentioned repeatedly. Those people or events recommended as valuable by a number of informants take on a special importance. In this research one particular influence was mentioned by a number of interviewees, who in turn suggested another person to interview.

Minichiello (2004:226) identifies the strategy of Stratified Purposeful Sampling. The strategy relies on identifying a particular criterion that applies to the sample group and then sampling for specific instances of the criterion. So in this we sample for success among experienced and well employed practitioners who were employed for their expertise in community practice, sometimes using snowball sampling. This requires a considerable amount of prior knowledge of the phenomenon of interest, which is the situation of the researcher in this study. One advantage of stratified purposeful sampling is that it allows for some comparison between the experiences of

those sampled.

Practitioners Interviewed

Interviewee 1.

This was with a person who described themselves as a teacher having formerly taught sociology to adults, with a degree in teaching and a Masters degree in Sociology. Two particular pieces of work were referred to in the interviews; one was with Aboriginal Reconciliation in Western Australia and the other was in developing an Early Childhood Service for the Ngala Parenting Services (WA).

Interviewee 2.

This person gave two examples of the relevance of their work. The first in New South Wales where they were impressed with a government model of community development (SLCS⁶) when working as a development officer with a chamber of commerce and then to Western Australia, working for a Local Government and carrying out a process with a fast expanding area new residents in new suburbs.

Interviewee 3.

This person had country origins, describing their parents as having strong community orientation. Originally employed in community nursing, this person obtained a BA in Anthropology before going to the Pilbara region and worked with community developers. They then lived in Perth for 3 years, sitting on community committees whilst also studying social work. Then worked with Family & Children's Services, involved particularly with the Lockeridge Aboriginal Camp before then later working in the South West with the Albany Drought. Finally three years with Timber Workers after old growth logging had been banned.

Interviewee 4.

The fourth interviewee was with a community development consultant, who had a degree in Human Geography and Psychology and had worked as a community development consultant for over 10 years. This person freely drew upon examples over 20 years, from their work in local government, with councils and community groups throughout Western Australia; particular stories were drawn from work carried out in Kalgoorlie.

⁶ Strengthening Local Communities Strategy, (SLCS), Human Services Dept, New South Wales 2004-6.
[Supporting
Community Renewal and Capacity Building across New South Wales]

Interviewee 5.

This person founded their own consulting company in Australia in 1992. Holding a Bachelor of Social Science from Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia, they had diverse expertise in recreation planning, community wellness, land development, regional planning, the retirement industry and social planning. In addition a broad experience in the public sector, having consulted to numerous public agencies on a wide range of issues, plus having extensive experience in the private sector, and spent several years in Asia working for a Chinese/Malaysian company in shopping centre management and executive development. Most of the examples provided came from consultancy work with land developments and real estate developers.

This person joined consultancy in 2000, and became Managing Director in 2002. Holding a Masters degree in International Administration from the School for International Training in Vermont, USA, and they worked in the USA, Tunisia, Ecuador and Australia, gaining extensive experience in social planning, strategic planning, community engagement, communications and training. At the time of the interview s/he was Director of World Vision International and World Vision Australia, and also serving on the World Vision Australia Indigenous Advisory Group and the Envirodevelopment Board for the Urban Development Institute of Australia (WA). This person has also worked with the University of Western Australia Extension Advisory Board, Southern Arc, Ausdance WA, Chrissie Parrot Dance Collective, and the Independent Filmmakers Association.

Having started working life as a filmmaker, s/he trained to work in Third World. However, there was then a realisation that the work aspired to was not in third world (as the people said they did not want this kind of help) but rather there was a need in the first world, where people in communities needed to take more responsibility for their place in the world.

As a result this person became a consultant in a company who offered services to real estate developers, who wanted expertise in creating communities whilst contributing to a positive brand image.

Interviewee 7.

This person graduated in San Salvador in marketing and architecture before being employed as an air traffic controller for nine years. S/he travelled to Australia in

1990 as a refugee and became a volunteer at a Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service in Brisbane, before being appointed as a Community

Development Officer at a Migrant Resource Centre, looking after the settlement of refugees on behalf of the Commonwealth Immigration Department. The next appointment was as the first Queensland Community Capacity Builder in 2000, working on a pilot project into problematical residential areas, to develop an alternative approach to crime, drug abuse and alcohol abuse.

It took a year for this person to obtain a Certificate in Community Development, which provided credit to complete a Masters' degree in Social Work Administration and Planning (which mainly comprised of community development units, including multi-cultural studies).

The resultant award of this Masters' degree provided entry to a Doctor of Social Science study – which at the time of interview had been suspended due to work and travel in the North West of Western Australia.

A number of consultants who had been interviewed – mentioned this person as one of the major influences in their practice. Hence the opportunity was taken to interview them – to see what were the main influences upon her/his practice and teaching.

S/he was an academic at the University of Queensland for 24 years. Originally receiving training in theology, later s/he became a lecturer in the Department for Social Work, where s/he lectured in community development, including a 'master's programme. S/he spent a vast amount of his/her time training others in community development, away from the university. Not only did s/he travel and train people throughout Australia, s/he also regularly went to train members of Community Aid Abroad when they were on site in India. S/he left academia to join Oxfam whilst at the same time becoming an adviser and trainer to senior management in BHP Billiton. Since leaving Oxfam, involvement has continued in localised community development training, but more particularly s/he has become involved on a more global level, advising and training the staff of BHP Billiton and other multinational mining companies – in South America and other continents.

Resources

All were recorded with their permission, so a small digital recorder was utilised. Some notes were taken as back up and reference to the recordings. Transcriptions were made by a professional transcription service, for which payment was made.

Ensuring Ethical Conduct

In this research bricolage uses people's narratives which consist in obtaining and then reflecting on people's lived experience and unlike objectifying and aggregating forms of research is inherently a relational endeavour. Every aspect of the work is touched by the ethics of the research relationship (Josselson R. in Clandinin 2007:527). So it is self evident that narrative researchers have an ethical duty to protect the privacy and dignity of those whose lives we study.

In acknowledgement of these aspects, an ethics application was prepared and approved by the Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee⁷ to carry out the interviews.

The application highlighted that participants would be involved in tasks that included open ended questions about the methods and procedures of their community building. The benefits to participants were identified as clarifying their work practices and providing insight to make their practice more effective. As the interviewees were expert professionals in their field of work, it was not anticipated that there would any adverse consequences for the interviewees.

A copy of the interview questions and a participants 'consent form' were also included in the application. The interviews were recorded by using a digital recorder, for clarity and easy recollection and final transcriptions were to be stored securely at the educational institution.

Permission to interview and transcribe content

All those interviewed received beforehand a letter from my supervisor seeking their written permission for taking part in the research. Earlier I had spoken with each, explaining the purpose of the research and asking permission to interview them. The copies of permission slips are held with the transcripts by Murdoch University in line with the commitment made in the Ethics Approval process.

At the interview, consent forms which had been approved by the Ethics' Committee, were completed and endorsed by each interviewee. These forms identified the nature of the researcher interviewee relationship, the nature of material to be discussed and the purpose of the research. An option to withdraw consent at any time was made available, as were other channels to discuss any concerns. It was also made clear that the interviewees would not

⁷ The Murdoch University Human Research Ethics Committee is a body recognised by all Universities in Western Australia

be identifiable in the final thesis documentation.

The Interview questions

The development of interview questions is a valuable defence against confusion and overload that is possible in the early stages of research (Punch 2009:57). The researcher can make considerable progress towards identifying specific interview questions, particularly when professional knowledge about the topic is brought to the research, which is the case in this study.

Through planning research in terms of interview questions the ideas and levels of abstraction are made more explicit, and according to Punch (2009:58) we can distinguish 4 levels of concepts and questions which vary in levels of abstraction, forming an inductive – deductive hierarchy. First there is the *research area*, which in this study is *community development*. Next there is the *research topic* which here might be *aspects of community development practice*. Then there are *general interview questions*; for this research it would be about *the background and experience of the practitioners*, and finally are *specific questions* –which in this research are about *concepts and elements of successful practice and influences on successful practice*.

Having identified Punch's 'hierarchy of concepts' in referring to the interview questions, there was an evident need to arrive at questions which sought an analysis and reflection from those interviewed. This was problematical because whilst some practitioners often think about their work, getting these practitioners to reflect deeply upon their own reflections is acknowledged by Schon (1983:243) as not being commonplace event. Hence a purposeful methodology was needed to encourage an insight process which might then add some value to their practice. As Schon (1983) remarks: "Managers do reflect-in-action, but seldom reflect on their reflection-in- action. Hence this crucially important dimension of their art tends to remain private and inaccessible to others.....this tends to perpetuate the split in the field of management, creating a misleading impression that practitioners must choose between practice based on management science and an essentially mysterious artistry" (p. 243).

Consequently, it appeared that some of those interviewed might not be aware of how they reflected upon their practice and the questions therefore needed to assist them to become more aware about their own reflections and how they went about these reflections. Action learning thus suggested itself as a relevant methodology, with its process of learning both from experience and knowledge. Consequently a thematic analysis was encouraged in many of the

questions, which served to lead the interviewees who then reflected further into the rationale behind the themes and so into an understanding of what is meant.

The research questions were developed by the researcher, but were further elaborated together with the supervisors and associate supervisors. This is a common strategy as it is usually an iterative process (Punch 2009:64) to get a stable idea of what one is trying to find out. There are benefits to doing some of this work with others – another student, or a small group, which might include supervisors, colleagues and other researchers. Others will often see possible questions – discussion with others can stimulate more deep thought about a topic. Most notably when drafting the questions, insights were used from Dr Ernie Stringer, who has written a number of texts on the subject of action research (see bibliography). Dr Stringer was also the first to ensure that the questions were connected to established theory and research. The questions were then redrafted following feedback from supervisors and colleagues over a six month period.

The resultant action research orientation required the questions to be open for the interviewees to answer on their own terms and allowed for the derivation of unusual responses (Bryman 2008:231-2). This was considered to be better than the use of closed questions which might discourage spontaneity. However, as a result the interviews were more time consuming and required greater effort for the respondents. That effort was considered to be beneficial to stretch the respondents to reflect upon their practices.

As identified earlier the questioning was qualitative, in line with the research. The aim was to show an interest in the interviewee's point of view, to be responsive and to seek richer detailed answers than might be obtained in quantitative research. In line with the interpretive theoretical perspective, all the questions sought to capture the quality of interpretation, definition, meanings etc. from the different social contexts selected by the interviewees.

The questions were all semi-structured, giving the interviewer the latitude to ask follow up questions, in response to what might be seen to be significant replies. The semi structured nature of the interviews, allowed a concentration on the research topic whilst also an emphasis on how the interviewee framed and understood issues and events. There was an emphasis upon allowing the context of their practice and the responses.

Below is the list of questions used. The actual questions schedule is attached in Appendix 1.

Question 1.

*Can you tell me about your community development/ community building work –
when you commence in a new setting?*

This was a question to allow a grand tour (Spradley 1979:86) of the interviewee's world of work. Stringer (2007:70) might also have termed this a 'guided tour' as it directed the interviewee to talk about community building work – rather than other work or interest. Hence the interviewee was given the freedom to provide the context of their work and emphasise what they saw as important. They were being asked to produce a narrative and a narrative analysis of what they considered to be important in their work and to construct this information in the way most meaningful to them.

Question 2.

*Who do you work with? Where? What are you trying to achieve/accomplish?
How do you go about doing this?*

This type of question Spradley (1979:88) calls a mini tour. Questions of 'how', are central to qualitative research, as it seeks an in depth understanding of human behaviour. This question seeks to understand more than 'what' the interviewee does, but the way in which they might do it in their own practice. By asking what they strive to achieve, the question seeks information on the 'intentionality' of the acts, the part of interpretivism that explores the relatedness, meaning and 'aboutness'.

Question 3.

Can you tell me about some of your successful work/projects/pieces of work?

This question again seeks a constructed narrative from the interviewee, something to which they attach particular meaning. This is an exploration of their experiential learning, getting them to reflect on their practice of when they believed they worked well and then how they describe that. It is also seeking what they describe and whether in terms of possible theme identification, or what social phenomenon they might group together.

Question 4.

What do you believe are the important elements /features of these

successes?

This draws out a narrative analysis of how the interviewees make sense of their work. It is asking them to reflect upon their work and the context where they believe success has occurred. This is action learning where the person studies their own work to reflect what was useful and may be important for repetition into other pieces of work – depending upon the context.

This question was trying to draw out the meaning accomplished by the interviewees (the social actors). So it is an orientation towards a constructivist approach, rather than objectivism – where a phenomenon might have an independent existence.

Question 5.

Do you have any other concepts/ notions/ frameworks that help participants more clearly understand the processes of your work? What is it that you understand by these terms/ concepts?

Again, this allows a reflection for narrative analysis, a making meaning of particular social contexts. It allows for a thematic presentation, derived from a process of experiential learning. So it seeks to answer the question; “How does this person make sense of their work and what words are used to describe the events that occurred in particular settings or contexts?”

Question 6.

Are there writers, theories or philosophies that underlie, inform or help you make sense of your practices?

This particularly asks the interviewee to reflect in terms of action or experiential learning (individually or what has been learnt with others). It is particularly practitioners constructing their own social meaning by describing and taking ownership of their own practice, with an acknowledgement of writers and experts who may well have influenced their practice. From this, the researcher was seeking to grasp the subjective meaning of the social actions in the practice – which is the epistemological position of interpretivism (Bryman 2008:694).

Summary

Having clarified the provisional knowledge claim and the specific questions to

be addressed in this research, this chapter has then described the entire research journey for this thesis. Through emphasising how action research and action learning have been used to present as a framework for this research, it has been possible to highlight how these methodologies which represent the values of democracy, liberation and personal growth, in a manner of continual and ongoing learning, fit well with the reflective nature of the practice shown by the interviewees in the data from their interviews.

Bricolage has been chosen as the main methodology, as it serves well in allowing for analysis of the human service discipline. It allows for a variety of methods, not least of which has been the illiciting of stories from the interviewees which in turn allow for the search for common elements both from individual interviews and across interviewees' accounts. Bricolage also allows for the study of this complex material, with various methods being drawn together for an analysis of that material and helps facilitate the conceptualisation of practitioner work for further presentation in this thesis. The authentication of this material has been brought about through continual validation and judgement based upon the experience, (including my own), stories and literature that is required by bricolage.

The use of bricolage does introduce limiting factors to the findings of this research. With the small sample, it is not possible to generalise about the lessons learnt. However, the fact that lessons and new knowledge has been developed, suggests that further research with a larger pool of practitioners could be well worthwhile.

With these limitations in mind, the resultant major common elements are elaborated upon and used in the rest of this thesis, to deconstruct material and reconstruct it in terms of new knowledge to contribute to understanding the action process which is community development practice.

Chapter 3: THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

In the research interviews, the informants noted the centrality of relationships in the narratives of their practice. This chapter explores how these practitioners who were interviewed talk about the importance of relationships in their practice. In doing so, key aspects and concepts of relationship building practice that the informants identified are discussed. In addition other concepts and strategies that promote relationship building are also highlighted and elaborated upon.

Narratives

As already mentioned all the practitioners who were interviewed for this research are equally as clear on the importance of relationship building to their practice. The following narratives were provided by some of the informants in describing their practice.

***Interviewee 1:** “Fundamentally what we are doing is building up relationships with people. That is actually what you do.”*

***Interviewee 2:** “Most important for community development is bringing people together to combine their talents, their ability – get to know each other and understand each other.”*

My purpose is to join people together. It is to unite the community. There are two basic slogans that I have used. I brought ‘Creating Unity in the Community’ with me from NSW. That was just clever words, community and unity. Then, some way into the process over here (WA), and it was quite some way into it, I had this kind of realisation one night that what this is really all about from the people’s perspective is that ‘In Helping One Another We Help Ourselves’. That is the truth of the whole program.

So, I intentionally and purposefully join people together, particularly with others who can assist them...it is purposeful joining. By getting to know each other those people feel more confident.”

Whilst both practitioners obviously agree on the importance of relationship building, interviewee 2 identifies that through people getting to know each

other, they also become more confident. Weber (in Nisbet 1960:80) appears to see this as an end in itself, seeing relationships as communal, when based upon the feelings of the parties where they belong to each other and are implicated in each other's existence.

Interviewee 5 suggests assisting people to return to time when building networks and relationships was more common. To achieve this s/he says an achievable outcome needs to be identified and to achieve that outcome, action oriented partnerships need to be created.

Interviewee 5: *“Nothing can work without relationships. I think a fundamental thing that we do is to give people the skill and opportunity to get back into building networks and relationships, and we do that by helping them achieve outcomes rather than wallowing. We actually help structure the process. What we do in our aspirational approach is build the partnerships between the different players depending upon what the identified outcome might be. These outcomes are identified because they can be achieved. So the process is about building relationships between people so that they can achieve something in their lives.”*

Interviewee 3 highlights the centrality of building relationships at all levels –between people, between organisations and between organisations and people.

Interviewee 3: *“A key factor is relationships. The whole community building stuff is not only building relationships between people, but between organisations, and between people in organisations, so it is multi-level. It is also about having goals and working towards them together. However, building relationships is central to practice – you have to understand that you have to build relationships. It is about dreams and working towards them but the test is to restrain from doing it yourself and concentrating upon maintaining the relationships and facilitating the connections. Whilst issues are important, the work is about linking together people with common interests. The test for your effectiveness is whether they follow up. Sustainability is about ongoing activity – that is it is important having the skills and resources to keep going.”*

Hence, through highlighting the importance of building relationships, these interviewees also note the need for these relationships to achieve goals and outcomes, indeed interviewee 3 advocates that relationships should become ongoing in sustainable activity. This reference to sustainability is also about action and movement.

Interviewee 2 confirms this: *“I think one of the most important things for*

community development is about basically bringing people together to combine their talents, abilities, the community assets, or each other. So, in developing what we saw as learning circles as part of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Programme, we felt that it was important to create this community network to bring all of the groups together and to encourage them to actually get to know each other and to understand each other, and ultimately to work together on issues that were of similar interest. I always encourage them to do that."

Interviewee 2 notes that people not only get to know each other but combine their talents and abilities to work on identified issues about which they have a common interest.

So for all these practitioners, people are brought together and, with some common goal in mind, gaining confidence through sharing their abilities, with the aim of the process becoming self-sustaining.

Despite this emphasis by practitioners on the importance of relationship building to their practice, the need for which is highlighted by related literature, they do not explore in detail the processes and practices actually involved in performing successful relationship building work.

So as in the earlier assertion by *Interviewee 2*, the observation remains at a certain level of description in describing relationship building: *"I took the basic concept of the original process from the NSW programme, to develop the workshops themselves, the actual process at each workshop in WA. I also brought over what we call the photographic surveys which is where with each of these groups - - the first stage was to conduct a photographic survey based on demographic groups within the suburbs. The purpose of that was to actually give the community group a simple, fun, but useful project that they could go out into their community; they could reach out to the people in their community and say, "We are going to do this. Will you participate?" Some of these residents' groups only had three people attending their initial meetings. By the time we got the photo surveys up and running they were all averaging an attendance of 30 people."*

This description is an overview of what happening but there is very little insight and detail on what is actually achieved in the process. Why should this be the case?

Relationship -building as a practice

As a consequence of this lack of detail, the following is an exploration of why

it is difficult to identify what is involved through the process of relationship building; why we tend to take the process for granted; and why little is written about the steps in the process. Because not much has been recorded and described, the reflections of the practitioners who were interviewed become very important in contributing to a description of relationship building practice. Through extracting information from the interviews, reflecting on relevant literature and my own experience, data is produced to add to the knowledge of what is involved in the practice of relationship building.

Community Meeting

In late 2009, I attended a community engagement focus group run by consultants. The object was to involve community members in the redevelopment of their residential suburb. The attendees were passionate about the topic and raised all sorts of issues, some of which were not directly related to the earlier introduction by the facilitator consultant. Much of the information provided was not recorded. When I mentioned afterwards to the facilitator that we may not have noted and responded to the concerns that were raised, she replied “Letting them vent is good”.

From my perspective, I realised the limited knowledge that the facilitator had about engagement and the benefit of joining people together in relationship – yet she was paid to get the community members’ investment in the process. She had missed the opportunity to build relationships, both for herself but also for the community, and instead had used her role as being somewhat superior and knowing better than the group. In this case she was using the situation for what she wanted to get out of it, to be able then to go away and say that people had been given the opportunity to be involved. She saw her job in simplistic terms of holding a meeting and taking no active professional role in having listened to attendees’ concerns to then assist with some action to address those concerns. She saw her task as attending a meeting and letting people say things, without being responsible for doing something with what she asked them to comment upon. In this situation she was using the process for her own ends and neither addressing issues of concerns raised in her process, nor building relationships for future occasions. I wondered how did the attendees feel after the meeting?

In direct comparison, judging from their interviews, the practitioners interviewed for this research would have done things differently. They would have used their relationship building skills to join people together and would have sought to achieve some longer term aim from this network building. They would still have sought to ‘extract’ some information but would most likely have tried to leave behind some benefit to those who attended, in the

form of relationships that were developed.

Whilst the consultant mentioned above was portrayed as a community practitioner, when compared with those interviewed for this research, her orientation and practice were very different. Is this then a matter of conscious behaviour, or differing skills, or differing values? Indeed in discussing relationship building, does this suggest that there is some conscious practice involved in relationship building?

In reflecting upon my experience, I have observed that in everyday life it can be identified how relationships in situations similar to that described above, can sometimes be manipulated or utilised for all sorts of reasons. For example when something is said to be a fraudulent relationship - it means that a relationship is being intentionally used to create the desired end result of one person and not necessarily for all those involved. In this way some people can be seen to be intentionally using their relationship skills. In turn this might lead to another question as to why some people are “better” at relationships than others. Do they have better skills and if so what are these skills and techniques that they use? How is it that some people e.g. engage with more casual ‘romantic’ partners than others and are seen as pariahs by some, what skills do they have? How is it that some people are more capable at making others feel ‘good’ in their social relationships? What processes are they following that may be different from those that others follow with differing results.

In all these varying outcomes, is there a pattern of consistent behaviour that can be observed and possibly taught to others, to make them more effective in relationship building?

One difficulty in this, is that it is my observation many people tend to believe that having relationships is very common, it is a ‘known’ that everybody has them and, as a result of this, the detail of the social processes involved are taken for granted. However, if they are so common as to be taken for granted, why are the outcomes of relationships so different? In identifying what they say is a purposeful technique, Kelly & Sewell (1988:66) say that relationship building practice as the community building technique they called ‘networking’ is a practice that makes conscious, purposeful and potentially powerful what happens between people every day in many unpremeditated and informal ways. Unfortunately, in the common understanding that it is natural to have relationships, we have become over-familiar with the process and it has often lost its potentially powerful nature.

It has been my belief, as is evidenced in the literature surveyed for this research and in this chapter, that this aspect of community work, i.e. how

relationships are consciously developed by workers, is poorly documented. Indeed, in listening to colleagues and through attending workshops, seminars on community participation, community engagement and community building, this area of micro practice, I believe, is indeed taken for granted. Practitioners spend very little time as a group or as individuals in trying to understand this aspect of community practice. It is presumed that everybody does it – relationships are things that everybody does. Indeed from my experience as a social work manager and educator, one of the most neglected parts of practice is relationship building – yet it is the same area where so many problems arise in daily practices. This deficit is acknowledged by Fletcher (1999), who noted that contemporary terminology for relational work is poor, partly because that work is disappearing. This position is further acknowledged by Owen and Westoby (2012:317) where they contend that community development theory has overlooked the value of the first step as it does assume that practitioners were already equipped with such skills. They go on to say that there seems to be a normative tradition of community development which largely takes for granted this component in the literature. Similarly my former research supervisor Booth (2006:112), noted that ‘social science has little grasp of the tacit understanding between people that enables them to place each other as sharing a common humanity, so whilst contemporary Western Society advocates relationships between people, at the same time it prevents the timing and use of spaces that might promote relationships.’ Putting this simply, he said that Western Society as it is now oriented, is unsustainable as ‘society’ because social acts and the society’s dominating practices are not aligned with sustainability of practice, nor with the respect between people that this would require.

Yet social science is meant to be the science of society and people, and the mechanism through which explanations of human behaviour should be developed and understood. As a result, it might be thought that the issue of building relationships should be explored and documented in the relevant social science discipline of social work, through which it could understandably be thought e.g. that to become successful counsellors, social workers would be thoroughly trained in creating sound relationships with their clients. Yet this is not the case. The issue is not really dealt with. It is particularly highlighted by recent writers who state that the old texts e.g. by Felix Biestek (1961:17) entitled ‘The Casework Relationship’, are still the most sound analysis. Yet, Biestek himself did not give any great insight into how to build a relationship and join with another person. He preferred to describe the casework relationship approach as following certain principles, rather than actions and skills. Biestek’s principles were;

- 1) Individualization – highlighting the uniqueness of each person that the

worker encountered:

- 2) The purposeful expression of feelings;
- 3) The value of allowing and enabling people to acknowledge in a supportive setting feelings of which they may or may not have been aware;
- 4) Controlled emotional involvement, which reminded the caseworker that it was inappropriate to identify too strongly with one person at the expense of others;
- 5) Acceptance – confirming the importance of people seeking help in accepting exactly who they are and of affirming their innate dignity and worth;
- 6) Non-judgemental attitude – meaning that the worker not assign guilt but recognize that there may be some limits to the acceptability of some actions;
- 7) Client self-determination – reminding workers not to give advice but to assist people to explore their own solutions;
- 8) Confidentiality – raising the issue and limitations of this requirement.

These principles might be a helpful description in relation to some of the outcomes being sought in the casework relationship, yet neither Biestek's nor other well respected definitions of 'counselling' in social work, assist in understanding how that relationship is actually formed. For example, turning to the Barclay Report (National Institute of Social Work [NISW 1982]) which, despite its early date, is also still acknowledged as one of the clearest references to the roles and tasks of social workers; the nearest that it gets to describing relationship building is when it refers to counselling as 'providing face-to-face communication between clients and social workers' (NISW 1982:33-34). Indeed the Barclay Report itself was struggling with the need to make social work more connected and relevant to community needs than had previously been the case. It subsequently recommended a different approach to the work, using community work processes to make the orientation more contextually relevant to those with whom it was targetting. It renamed the work 'community social work' and developed ways to work more clearly with the 'world of the client group'. So, whilst the later report of Barclay does achieve an emphasis upon face-to-face communication, which in turn suggests relationships developing through some form of dialogue – the nature of that dialogue is neither detailed nor elaborated upon. Once again the depth of analysis is shallow.

Yet it is evident that works like Barclay are a long way forward in their relationship orientation than other more classic social work literature. For example, Hollis (1972:229), clearly talks of an unequal worker client relationship, suggesting that through the process of the client or non-worker coming for help signifies weakness – acknowledging that another person, the social worker, was wiser and stronger; and classified the client/worker relationship as one where a person gets “treatment”.

This orientation is not dissimilar to that of the community engagement consultant noted earlier, who did not see a role for him/herself in developing relationships. She/he saw their expertise as extracting information from the community with no intention of ensuring an ongoing process.

Those interviewed convey a different approach. For example *interviewee 1* describes what she did over a two year period when holding ‘networking meetings’ during her involvement in an Aboriginal Reconciliation Programme:

“To do my work of relationship building, it was necessary to be an active listener – to show honesty, respect, trust, acceptance and understanding. Respect was shown by active listening and sharing a common point of interest, which in turn was reinforced by double checking with them over the perceived common interest. I see ‘respecting’ as a very detailed concentration on what somebody is saying – others call it ‘attending’ though it is in more detail. I see myself as a ‘practitioner’ in this process.”

The same practitioner reflected further on this practice:

“So, what does this actually depend on? It really depends on doing three things, that is behaving with honesty, respect, and with inquiry. By inquiry, I mean really open conversation, being really active and involving. From carrying out those three, if carried out well, you get three rewards. The rewards, if you have followed your disciplines well, are trust, acceptance, and understanding. The two groupings of behaviour and rewards can be imagined as if in two circles that overlap. In the middle of the overlap of the circles is love. Which can also be called ‘relationships’.”

So whilst this person saw herself as a practitioner, she also clearly saw herself carrying out a distinct active listening process with other people whereby she would show honesty, respect, trust, acceptance and understanding in her communication. To gauge the success of this process, from the relationships that were formed indicated whether she experienced as receiving the rewards of trust, acceptance and understanding.

Interview 1 has a clear idea of what she is trying to achieve and how. She was very purposeful in her practice, but why was she trying to achieve this?

Building Relationships – Purposeful Practice

What are the drivers behind the relationship building practices of the consultants who were interviewed? *Interviewee 6* provides an historical perspective:

“People aren’t living in the family compounds that we had years ago, generations ago. They live in an individualistic world which is governed by material things and have lost the art of relationship building. So they need help in re-engaging.”

This interviewee sees the rationale one of assisting to re-engage with another, because today’s individualistic world has deskilled them in building positive relationships. This is reinforced by Elias (in Hoggett 1997:5) who says that the use of the term ‘community’ has remained to some extent associated with the hope and the wish of reviving once more the closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds between people vaguely attributed to past ages. Consequently it is in the reviving of this association that community practitioners have become involved.

This notion of ‘reviving’ derives from the essentially normative judgement made from debates about community, contrasting the organic ties of community with the mechanistic ties of the more contractual relationships which characterise industrial and post-industrial society (Taylor 2003:36). Scholars trace concern with community and ‘loss of community’ back to the work of Tonnies (1995) and the distinction he makes between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, contrasting traditional holistic, territorial communities (usually seen as rural) with the newer fragmented, contractual relationships of industrialised society. So although good may be achieved in the associated relationships of *Gesellschaft*, they are not seen the same as the positive relationships of *Gemeinschaft*, based in the holistic rather than the fragmented.

The territorial argument is challenged by Lee and Newby (1983:57) who say that the fact that people live close to one another does not necessarily mean that they have much to do with each other, as there may be little interaction between neighbours. From this it is possible to conclude that it is the nature of the relationships between people and the social networks of which they are part that is one of the significant aspects of a ‘good community’.

Whilst the concept and values associated with what is meant as a ‘good community’ are explored later in chapter 5; suffice to say here that

Putnam's use of this normative term (i.e. good) focuses on the importance of creating relationships of trust in what he sees as 'making democracy work' (Putnam 2000:336-349). He defines it as features of social life and social capital; that is the networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives.

This notion of 'pursuing shared objectives', as a source for building relationships in community practice is highlighted by a number of those interviewed, in talking about their search for commonalities in their work.

As one practitioner clarifies: *"Relationships are basic to me in everything we do. Especially in community development, you can't work in isolation. So building relationships means for me identifying commonalities. There are always commonalities when we look at what we can work with and bring together. Just being human beings we have things in common. There are always commonalities in whatever you think, or in whatever bad things you hate. I always look for opportunities to build more relationships, more networks, I can say. Some people don't look at the opportunities; some say 'We don't have anything in common with these', but there are always commonalities."* (**Interviewee 7**)

This notion of commonalities is further developed by *Interviewee 1* who describes her work with Reconciliation and with a group of parents who were concerned about developing services for their children and reflects on the commonalities in her initial practice:

"It is really about identifying people who are prepared to work with the same identified issue as others share. Then, depending on where the resources are or what the resources are, it is about building up either individuals or groups or organizations, resourcing them with whatever you have got and encouraging them to share whatever they have. So, it is that - - It is not really getting people to do something (You now, I am not going in and prodding people) but it is about finding out what they are already doing and exploring the similarities they would like to work on."

This practitioner then identifies these commonalities in searching through with people they work with, for the things they regard as similar.

Interviewee 7 provides further examples of finding commonalities in her work in two different settings, firstly developing supports with migrant women in a city and then with Aboriginal women living in a remote area, through looking for potential networks upon from which to direct action.

"It can start with a small network, and that small network can be linked with another network that at the end, from little network to little network, all of

them are mapping their community. Everything is multi dynamic, it is all about looking for systems and potential networks.

I normally try to build networks, for example, if we say around children. Okay, what does it mean? Well, we have parents, we have perhaps playgrounds, we have people, whoever is related to education, the schools, the teachers, the parks, wherever we have any kind of person who runs an activity for children, somebody who sells things for children, toys or whatever. There is always something in common and there is always someone who sees the same interests in a different perspective.”

By providing children as a starting point, this worker then explores the interested networks around the children, to channel into that interest.

The following final quotation on commonalities goes further than just finding out people’s interests but identifies the process as being about a common set of values, a common vision for that particular group of people. **Interviewee 6** describes her work with new residents in new real estate locations:

“The approach that we use on most projects is about trying to build the social capital. So, that is the networks between people and the rest which is so important in being able to create relationships between groups, a common set of values and a common vision for the future that is the whole social capital.”

The notions of what comprises these relationships and social networks are elaborated upon by Putnam in what he also calls *social capital* in his celebrated work *Bowling Alone – the collapse and revival of American community* (2000:19). Putnam says: “whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to the properties of individuals, *social capital* refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called ‘civic virtue’. The difference is that ‘social capital’ calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a sense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital”. In his book, Putnam bemoans the demise of social capital, as contributing to the lack of cohesiveness and virtue in western society. He is an advocate for the development of these quality relationships and networks.

For Putnam (2000:274), when people are asked about what ‘community’ means to them, it is to such networks that are most commonly cited, ‘For most of us, our deepest sense of belonging is to our most intimate social networks, especially family and friends. Beyond that perimeter lies work, church, neighbourhood, civic life, and an assortment of weak ties’. Allan

(1996:2) also believes in the importance of informal relationships, which whilst helping us to build a sense of self and individuality, enable us to navigate our way around the demands and contingencies of everyday life.

What can be drawn out of these observations, both from the interviews and literature is that relationship building is something aimed at promoting change, and the analysis for this change is guided by values derived from democratic ideals which include personal fulfilment. This in turn is a planning process in itself aimed at achieving people's satisfaction as a foremost priority. Thomas (1983:19) emphasises that community development is essentially concerned with affecting the course of social change through the two processes of analysing situations and forming relationships to bring about some desirable change. Taylor too reinforces this and, like Tonnies (1995), identifies that community development practice is the glue to create a society of morality and value; and again relationships, morality and values come to the fore (Taylor 2003:21). Nisbet (1960:82) too sees normative ideals achieving good community, providing that the relationships are oriented towards creating this type of community and that the family relationships involved and those of small informal groups are a positive element of forming these 'good' communities.

Similarly, the communitarian school and of course Putnam (Taylor 2003:40) focus on the values of 'making democracy work' through the creation of relationships to achieve shared objectives. Putnam notes an emphasis upon the importance and close relationship of social capital (relationships) with a civic society and how people relate the term 'community' to a deep sense of belonging, to intimate social networks, especially family and friends. Then finally in reinforcing these aims, in the UK, Thomas (1983:19) emphasises the aims of community development being democratically valued and people oriented, achieving this through building purposeful relationships.

So these all identify that community development practice, through building relationships is the glue to building a good community. Taylor (2003:34) develops this theme further, whilst acknowledging that people may share common characteristics e.g. beliefs and activities; this does not mean they identify as a community. She sees need for common interests such as common economic interests, social relationships or experiences of power in order to provide the glue that turns community from a simple description to an active agent, where relationships are strong and have a purpose.

These points are all reinforced by informants in interviews. For example, **Interviewee 5** talks about some of his initial work with residents of a specific area and how important it is to get 'runs on the board' to keep them

involved:

“If you don’t prove that there is going to be an outcome, people don’t get engaged. So, it is really important to have those early wins, but to do it in a way which is a reflection of what the model of community development is, which is, “What are we trying to achieve?”

Like Taylor (2003:34) this interviewee sees the need to have people reflect upon common interests in order to develop strong relationships with a purpose. Emphasising this point, **Interviewee 3** provides a narrative of her involvement with timber workers in an area of industrial uncertainty. In this she clearly describes her methodology, she clearly takes the point of commonalities further and stresses motivation and energy being driven from the commonalities.

“First [in the process] you investigate if there are people who have similar concerns and then link them together and test with them as to whether they are committed to actually take community action. That is, if they want a process of doing something about what their concerns are. So it’s really about whether there is an intent or enough motivation to actually follow through and join with others and do something about a response to the issue and whether you have a role in supporting them in doing that. With the Timber workers I heard their story and ‘went with the energy’. Identifying the energy is important for relationships which are joined to achieve something. Motivation or energy is important, as wherever there is no energy, there is a lack of interest.”

Interviewee 4, in describing his methodology, explores his own work in consultancy, including the professional supervision of community workers:

“I aim to work in ways that do build relationships between people. Hence a question I ask in supervising community workers is. “In the work you are involved in – where have you seen relationships built?” Why the emphasis on relationships? Well relationships – strong relationships, are not dependent upon any one person hence they can be used to strengthen the resilience of communities.

For me there is a bit of a picture to all this. It is the starting point to building a network of relationships which is not dependent on any one person. The more that I can work in ways that draw people together the more powerful I think capacity building becomes. Because I build relationships between people – with some action in mind, it is really about maintaining direction and energy.”

So this interviewee has stressed that he builds relationships between people whilst at the same time maintaining the energy and direction of the action being followed.

Third Places – A Strategy for Enabling Relationships to be Built

A point made by a number of practitioners was how a physical location could be important as a space where relationships could be built. Oldenburg (1999:20-42) identified cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons and other hangouts at the heart of a community, where relationships can be more easily fostered. Whilst Oldenburg calls these public spaces ‘third places’ the practitioners interviewed also called them community and infrastructure hubs. Oldenburg identifies that some public spaces serve as a place where people can go and they know they are likely to bump into someone who they know; these could be English ‘pubs’, French cafes, Japanese tea houses and the list goes on. Oldenburg (1999:42) identifies that although a radically different kind of setting from the home, the third place is remarkably similar to a good home in the psychological comfort and support it extends. In third places conversation is the primary activity and they are normally open in ‘off’ hours as well as other times. The character of the place is determined most of all by its regular clientele and is marked by a playful mood.

How might these third places be used to build relationships? Some of the practitioners explain:

Interviewee 5: “Another tool we use is that we think of infrastructure hubs and social hubs as centres of energy. That is why some of the processes such as school locations near to coffee shops are so positive – mothers go for a coffee after being in each other’s presence dropping their children at school. It is an excuse for a bona fide ‘getting together’.

We actually develop community hubs where people meet each other. Whilst we are not architects we can intentionally turn things around with ‘third places’. The notion of the third place is exceptionally important. That notion of third place was a place where lots of different people could come to and share their ideas with one another. So, the notion of third place is extremely strong and important. It can be cafés.”

This next interviewee explains his methodology in relation to place and highlights that the commonality for some people can be a place where they can meet others of similar interests (children etc.). This can then lead to the building of further relationships and action.

Interviewee 6. *“To do this with the community we might arrange a meeting in an area and get people from the same street to introduce themselves to each other and then we might arrange an activity for them to be involved in. Their motivation is a lot about socialisation, that is contact with another person.”*

Interviewee 1 reached the point of reflection and summarised what relationship building practice meant to her, particularly relating to her learning circles work:

“So in summary for relationship building; I believe that hubs are important. To me hubs are a small group of people with differing experience but common passion. The people hub holds together through a shared vision and a strategy to use their skills towards achieving that vision, by linking to existing networks and points. --- There is a need to make sure that something happens, as a result of their input, - they need to go away with something....They need to feel better that they have come – get a buzz from making a difference. It is about external knowledge of their value.”

So for this practitioner a hub can be seen as group of people who, because of their location, presumably due to a common interest, they can the work upon further developing along the lines of a commonly agreed action or actions. It is through providing a third space that this process can become more powerful as identified next by **Interviewee 6** who provided information on how she used physical strategies to encourage relationship development:

“Another strategy that we carry out is to create ‘spaces’ where relationships can be more easily built and developed. So although with facilities and third places our influence is minimal. We do recommend to planners what we believe is needed to get a sense of what gives a place meaning.

She then gives as an example of how the process works, but in this case it required the practitioner to intervene to ensure that the third space became effective.

In our community and economic development plan we promoted the idea of the school being an ESD’ (environmentally sustainably designed) ‘school, and it ended up being the first environmentally sustainably designed school in the State. We then argued that both the school and the community centre should be co-located in order to create a community hub, or third space. The Department of Planning and Infrastructure has got a policy which is an urban sort of philosophy that suggests that those kinds of functions which have a community focus like a school or a corner shop or a recreation centre or a community centre, they should actually be spread out. They have got a

mathematical formula that they should be every 800 metres. So, on that basis they said, 'No, the community centre needs to be way over the other side of the park.' We spent a year actually lobbying with them to get the community centre back next to the school in which we were eventually successful. Now, the school uses the environmental lab in the community centre. The school kids are in there which helps to activate the community centre. For the parents when they come and drop their kids off at school, it is easy for them to go and drop into the community centre. So, all of a sudden we have got all this happening there in a third place. Actually, we do have a bit of influence with hubs and that sort of thing."

Summary

This chapter has identified the importance of relationship building in community practice through evidence drawn from literature, those interviewed for this research plus information based on my own experience. At the same time it has shown that the process has been very poorly documented, despite being so crucial to effective practice. This lack of detail to good practice is attributed the overfamiliarity with social processes like relationship building. This reason should not be an excuse for bad practice, particularly as those interviewed have emphasised how central relationship building is to effective community practice.

From the research data, effective community practice of relationship building has been seen each time to need a commonly agreed goal and the potential to be a sustainable process. These aspects have been judged to increase the confidence of those who have been involved.

Purposeful effective relationship building in community practice has also been seen as associated with an action orientation, towards social change, guided by values and ideas of democracy.

So this purposeful practice, which is central to effective community practice is seen to comprise of notions of a commonalities leading to common goals, be developed through honesty and respect; which results in achieving identified goals, participants gaining in confidence and increasing their levels of trust towards each other.

Finally it was also seen that this purposeful practice can be assisted by the development of third place, where relationships can be facilitated, through people attending due to their like interests.

Whilst this chapter has gone a long way to detailing the processes in relationship building, it has not identified what happens, in terms of micro

practice, when individuals meet. What do we need to understand to ensure that the relationship building process actually commences.

The next chapter turns its attention to this micro area – that of ‘joining and engagement’.

Chapter 4: JOINING and ENGAGEMENT – *MICRO PRACTICE* *IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*

The single man in isolation poses in himself the essence of man neither as a moral nor a thinking being. The essence of man is contained only in the community, in the unity of man and man - a unity which rests upon the reality of the difference between "I" and "thou".

(Feuerbach 1986: para 59)

In the previous chapter, it was highlighted that building relationships was a central part of community practice. Consequently, I have written this next chapter looking closer at this process, because I have already identified that many researchers and writers believe that relationship building is very important in community work.

Having noted that the practice of building relationships tends to be a taken for granted assumption in the social sciences, this chapter attempts to unravel the early occurring constituent parts of this crucial process. The parts are identified as 'micro practice' and the emphasis is upon the formative practice immediately prior the creation of effective community building relationships. So this chapter aims to fill the gap in the formative process and thereby add to knowledge for developing effective community practice.

Firstly to recap, whilst this importance is acknowledged both by those interviewed and in the literature, why should relationship building be highlighted?

This is largely explained by Martin Buber, (in Friedman 1960:62) who made observations about the inability of people to understand others and to form good relationships. He described "this resultant dysfunction in Western Society of

'blocking relation' as evil". He also believed that without the ability to enter relation, cursed with the arbitrary self-will and belief in fate; that particularly the modern person, the individual and the community become sick, and the 'I' of the true person is replaced by the empty 'I' of individuality. So Buber saw society getting sick through a lack of relationships. He said that the evil which results takes the form of individual life in which institutions and feelings are separate provinces and in community life, in which the state and the economy are cut off from the spirit and the will

to enter relation. In both cases he did not see what he called the *I-It* as evil in itself but only when it was allowed to have complete mastery and to shut out all relation. Buber observed that our culture has more than any other, abdicated before the world of *It* and said that this abdication makes impossible a life of spirit. [Note: I elaborate upon this theme of 'I-It'/'I-Thou' further in this chapter].

These are pretty strong words in observation, but the analysis does justify the resultant importance that the interviewees saw for building relationships in creating good communities. Of course this then leads to the question of how to build these relationships, yet very few go further to explore what constitutes (later described in chapter 6) as this micro practice in relationship building. However, from my own reflections I do believe that it is possible to go into greater detail. I believe that relationship building is a process that can be broken down into identifiable parts, following sound observation.

Here again the interviewees are able to describe some of the parts of this process.

Interviewee 3 says: “It all gets back to building relationships. If you can’t engage with the person you can’t build a relationship. Relationship is about ‘engaging’ – understanding what their world is like, what is important to them – with a lot of time listening, hearing, showing respect, maintaining eye contact, showing you are engaged, using physical body language, showing concern, caring with honesty, being credible, checking and remembering.

It is about trying to walk in another person’s shoes. It is about trying to imagine what it would be like to walk in their shoes. You may not be in total philosophical understanding or empathy with them but it is them understanding that you are trying to hear what they are saying and to visualize what it is like for them.”

Whilst *Interviewee 1* describes another part of this understanding of engagement, in terms of hearing another person’s story: “So you are actually able to see that story from their point of view. You are double checking, and you are actually able to put yourself almost where they are, or where they were in that story. So, you are actually hearing it from, you know, their side. I think that you can do that regardless of what it is. So, it is very active; as I say, double checking, yes”.

Through many years of supervising community work and social work practitioners, I have had to ask myself questions such as: What is it that I expect these people to be able to do to show some level of success in their work? What is it that they are doing with individuals and what are the

processes that successful work follows? Why cannot some of them connect to some people? What is happening here and what do they need to know to understand their initial work with people? Indeed -what is the practice that I am looking for?

Social Science and Micro Practice

The comments by those interviewed are all contributions to data on what I call micro practice. Micro practice is the term that I use to explain the ‘how to’ of building developmental relationships which are at the heart of development work. This is about joining with others, hearing stories, seeing what they see, engaging in dialogue and working with reflective action themes, and as rationalised by Burkett and Kelly

(2004:28) ‘We do this because we are concerned with the agendas of the people and with the sustainability and mutuality of the process.’

It is through micro practice that the experience of ‘seeing through the eyes of another’⁸ is sought, and in doing this the other person can experience the sharing which can be exemplified in phrases similarly developed from other parts of the world which are in common use as identified by Burkett and Kelly (2004:34):

“come in, sit and be with me a while”

“eat from my bowl”

“walk in my moccasins”

Through Babies’ Eyes

In thinking about this process and making some observations – including with my own family – I realised that there is a basic relationship encounter that most people carry out. Many people really try to achieve the initial relationship building task when they interact with babies. In thinking about communication with a baby, what is done? There is a guess about what this ‘no words’ participant is wanting or feeling. There is a continual attempt to join/spend time with a “hello” or “she must be”....”he wants”..... “oh look at the little professor” all as explanations of the child’s world. Most of us do not want to harm this little person, but want to communicate and ensure that they have their needs met.

Because a child does not have words with which to communicate, a guess is tried to work out what they want and feel. Most parents become very good at

⁸ The Foundation Principle of Rabindrinath Tagore from Gitanjali, 1993:85 The University Press Ltd, Dhaka

this and build a relationship with their child/baby. (It is only as they get older that the understanding often becomes worse!) In trying to understand this 'world of the baby', what is it like to be a baby and what do they feel and want, are they understanding what I am doing in trying to meet their needs, what is going on in this process, what is happening in this communication? It certainly comprises of more than just words; it includes facial expression and other non-verbal activities. *The baby smiles – I smile back – I feel good.*

This is all an attempt to try to get inside the world of the baby and understand what it looks like and feels like to them. It is joining with a defenceless child with whom some emotional bond is felt. So can this process be useful in our other relationships? How is it possible to get intentionally close to other people? How is this done?

Relationships and a Sense of Self.

In looking for examples of good practice, community development writers (as discussed later in chapter 6) are able to talk about the practice of working with groups of people and social networks whilst at the same time they are also able to expand on how the worker needs to develop a sense of self, an awareness of self, in some commonality of practice. Why should they emphasise these aspects in practice? Well to start with, in the context of community, without involving others (in groups and networks) there would be no community possible because a community is an interconnected group of people. Then to do things together, these people must have some form of relationship with each other – whether positive, negative, economic, social etc. Finally the worker, in order to work with these people must develop some relationship with them that allows him/her to work with them; and to do that, he or she must know themselves well enough in order to understand how they can best relate to others. Whilst little has been elaborated upon describing the dynamics of this micro 'face-to-face' relationship process, the workers need to be aware of how they as a person affect their own work and the relationships that they develop.

In contrast to other writers, educators like Kelly & Sewell (1988:56) highlight relationship building as a process and note that... 'relationship is the pivot on which all else turns in community building. They say it is important for us to be aware of the many and different relationships that are possible and of the many ways in which to engage them. Who-we-are makes a great deal of difference to what we do, but who-we-are in relationship is the process through which the work gets done.'

'Who we are in relationship', is consequently seen to be very important – which means that an awareness of the self is fundamental. This sense of self is

about values, experiences and behaviours that we bring to interactions which can help or hinder our effectiveness. A sense of self is important so that it can be conveyed to ourselves, for when people are unsure of who they are, they try to package and market a version of themselves. Yet when people reach out to meet each other, they are confirming each other's existence. When they meet as honestly and attentively as possible, they augment each other's sense of self. 'A sense of self reminds us to attend to who we are, to acknowledge and name feelings, and to commit ourselves to the wellbeing and potential of who we can be' (Kelly & Sewell 1988:59). Kelly and Sewell go on to indicate that a sense of self is based in the 'I', but is formed and transformed in the multitude of connections that are made with other people, who are the 'other' or 'thou'. Indeed a sense of self is identified as very important by those interviewed in this research.

Interviewee 4 identifies the importance of his/her sense of self in their practice. S/he demonstrates this through referring to a book entitled *The Courage to Teach* by Parker J Palmer, in which Palmer relayed how he talked to a lot of students about who in the past had been *influential teachers* for them. It could have been primary school, university, or whatever. From this s/he was able to deduce that *there was not a technique that those influential people*, who were the most inspiring, had in common. What they did have in common was that they were being fully themselves when they were teaching it. This reinforced this informant's view that:

"for me good workers have a strong sense of self and are 'fully' themselves - to be fully yourself is the centre of my micro process."

The earlier observations by Kelly & Sewell about an awareness of self are far from those made by social work writers. Even in the Barclay Report (NISW 1982:210.13.49) which emphasised the importance of improving social work practice, counselling was seen to be mainly as the learned worker imparting knowledge – in terms of a monologue rather than a dialogic process, rather than anything about understanding those with whom they worked. Yet for Kelly & Sewell (1988:62) the communication in building relationships is the dialogue that occurs, and is pivotal to the resultant eventual relationship. This process which occurs is in the complexity of communication between the 'I' and the 'Thou' (the other). This identified process is central to this research and the interviewees' observations are explored to develop greater understanding of what constitutes successful practice when deliberately carrying out this communication process with the aim of engagement to achieve identified objectives.

Owen and Westoby (2012:307) also identify this communication as being at

the core of the dialogue. They acknowledge that community development theory has overlooked the critical first step and that there is serious absence of literature relating to the function of communication in the formative stages of community building. They also note that the discipline cannot continue to take the strategic dimensions of the practice as an assumed knowledge and practice, and contend that community development scholars and practitioners have not engaged with the critical dimensions of the literature (p308). Like Owen and Westoby (2012:308), this current research proposes that in community development practice, there are certain conditions that provide a greater chance of sustaining connection in the early stages of developmental relationship building. However, this research differs in not concentrating on the 'agreement to act' stage and focusses in this chapter on the nature of the more micro process of the encounter before any agreement.

Dialogue and the Dialogic Process

What is this pivotal communication dialogue that occurs in relationship building?

Interviewee 2 describes in general terms this beginning of this dialogic process in his work context:

"It is about everybody grows through the process, not just the community itself, the city, the different staff at the city, even me. I mean I come in as the coordinator and sort of the driver of the project, but the project developed and expanded as I learnt more about the community as I was working with the community."

The word "dialogue" comes from the Greek "dia-" = "through" and "logos" = "the word, the meaning." David Bohm (Senge 2000:240) suggests the original meaning of dialogue was "meaning passing or moving through . . . a free flow of meaning between people in the sense of a stream that flows between two banks."

In addition, the dictionary definition of dialogue is: an "interchange and discussion of ideas, especially when open and frank, as in when seeking mutual understanding and harmony" (Websters Dictionary, 2009, Wiley Publishing – Ohio).

Exploring Dialogue

In both of the above definitions the term dialogue, suggests a joining,

understanding and mutuality of communication.

Theoretical work on dialogue during the past century comes from three main sources. Firstly Martin Buber (in Friedman 1960) used the term in 1914 to describe a mode of exchange between people in which there is a true turning toward and a full appreciation of the other as a genuine being. In the 1980s psychologist Patrick DeMare (1991) suggested that large "socio-therapy" meetings could help people understand and alter the cultural meanings within society and thus help heal mass conflicts. Finally, physicist David Bohm (2006) focused on the nature of thought and suggested that collectively attending to the process of thinking as it arises would help surface our tacit assumptions, opinions, rules for managing differences, and the like. For the purposes of this chapter and looking primarily at face-to-face relationship building, I explore the theoretical work of Bohm (2006), then Buber (2002) and Bakhtin (1981).

For Bohm (2006:55), dialogue creates the opportunity for coherent, collective thought instead of fragmentation, because it is a way to step back and consciously *notice* how our thinking and feeling are occurring. It then becomes possible to begin asking about the deep sources of those thoughts and feelings.

The dialogue that is involved is of fundamental importance in community development work, as it is central to building relationships, sharing information, enabling action and determining the direction of where the process will go. Dialogue implies a connection between people that is respectful both of the self and of the other; and in order to maintain this respect it is necessary to reflect upon the feelings and thoughts of both ourselves and the other.

Interviewee 4 reflects upon dialogue that occurred in a cross cultural project in Kalgoorlie and the development of a Cultural Centre in Port Hedland, suggesting some methods with which to commence effective dialogue:

“To me the ideas come from the dialogue and to create the dialogue I use all sorts of methods – appreciative enquiry, conflict resolution. In Kalgoorlie, the method was really a conflict resolution method (you know, you could pick it up on the conflict resolution website, or wherever).”

Communication in the form of dialogue is important for face-to-face relationships. It is useful therefore to explore some of its nature, the building blocks and how those involved can play an effective part in building sound relationships upon which they can create something positive for each other –

something 'good'.

The Building Blocks of Dialogue

Interviewee 4 is again a rich source of reflection about the process of her/his work and elaborates upon how to make the dialogue work:

"This happens through 1. Equalizing the power in the room or in the process. 2. Drawing out the ideas of people in the equalizing process. 3. Making sure the information gets recorded. 4. Drawing together all the bits into the same space so that they can be explored."

This description is not unlike the work of Gerard and Teurfs (in Gozdz 1995:143-

53) who reflect upon the inherent process involved in dialogue and identify four building blocks or overlapping and interwoven sets of skills which they see as together constituting dialogue. These are:

- suspension of judgement
- identification of assumptions
- listening
- inquiry and reflection.

Suspending Judgements and Assumptions

How often is there mindful consideration of the assumptions and judgements from which one operates, makes choices, and acts in the world? To achieve this mindful awareness, Gerard and Teurfs (in Gozdz 1995:143-53) suggest the need to first identify the surfacing and then the suspending of assumptions and judgements as key practice in dialogue. The term "suspend" comes from Latin roots that mean to "hang up," like hanging clothes on a clothesline. Suspending assumptions and judgements is not putting them in abeyance, but holding them up for conscious examination and exploration.

Whilst through dialogue others' points of view are seen and it is possible to become more open to new ways to perceive and think about the situation and to realize the judgments made are about how things are thought to be, rather than necessarily as the "truth." Whilst each person's comments are seen as true in their own right, the challenge next is to see how they might fit together into a coherent pattern and make some sense to the observer.

This making sense process can be seen in further reflections upon her/his practice, *interviewee 4* clearly describes what he/she seeks as the outcome from dialogue as a new truth:

“I seek through my questioning to create ‘dialogue’ which is a space for people to talk and to listen – where they reflect and it brings a new ‘truth’. Some of my expert advice comes from the actual dialogue – that is the answers come from the people in the dialogue - which is the ‘middle truth’, which is not there unless the two parties are in dialogue.”

So in exploring the underlying beliefs, assumptions, inferences, and the generalizations of the self, it is possible to begin to explore the differences with others and discover where there is common ground, or middle truth.

Listening

The importance of listening as the next building block of dialogue, was brought out in the interviews.

Interviewee 2: “I told them that I was there to listen and then they talked to me about the kinds of things that were important to them”

Interviewee 1: Using the technique of active listening, you are able to hear the story from their side”

Listening is essential to dialogue, that is listening not just to others but also to the self and its inner processes. This goes far beyond basic active listening for understanding, to deeply reflective and mindful listening.

Interviewee 3 “It is literally paying attention, the technical answer would be through good listening, good questioning. You really, really pay attention to their gifts and their strengths and their passions”.

The Chinese characters below which make up the verb "to listen" say something important about the true depth of listening:



As Krishnamurti (1991: Vol 1) reminds us ... ‘we can truly listen and learn only when we are giving someone (or something) our undivided attention’.

In course of dialogue, the larger meaning listened for is emerging from honest, open sharing among the differing perspectives of ourselves and of others. This complexity is reflected in the proverb:

“Listening looks easy, but it’s not simple. Every head is a world” Cuban proverb

Listening is very complex and is not simply about talking or listening. Sound dialogue takes skill and there are many considerations; for example according to Burkett and Kelly (2004:39) some of the barriers to effective listening are:

- Not paying attention – the mind wanders, being busy and thinking of what to do next
- Jumping ahead – thinking about what is going to be said, finishing people’s sentences
- Clayton⁹ listening – believing that the answers are already known, just wanting to hear them said. Listening only to what fits with preconceived answers.
- Manipulative listening – trying to lead the person somewhere, listening in exchange for compliance or listening only to topics decided earlier.
- Personalising context – coming back to your own context constantly, linking what is being said to your own experience – ‘yes that reminds me of the time I...’
- Constrictive time – listening on a tight

⁹ Claytons is the brand name of a non-alcoholic beverage packaged to resemble bottled whisky. Although the product is no longer being actively marketed, the name has entered into Australian and New Zealand vernacular where it represents a “poor substitute” or “an ineffective solution to a problem”. (Source: Claytons official website)

schedule.

Listening in community development is not only a learning process, it is also an action learning process (see Chapter 2); this means that there is constantly the opportunity for learning about the self and others in the process. This is closely associated with the personal agendas already mentioned and means that in building relationships there is a need to “carry our own agenda(s) lightly” and always be aware of ourselves (Burkett and Kelly 2004: 39). Some of the questions that can be asked to create a greater understanding of ourselves are:

- What are our deeply held beliefs?
- What are the assumptions from which we're operating?
- What are our mental models of what's going on and being considered, and where did those models come from?
- What images and metaphors pervade our language?
- What is happening inside us as well as in the team or group?
- Is the same data being looked at?
- Is this thinking in the moment or from memory or projection?
- What is the quality of our listening -- to ourselves and to each other?
- What is the collective field and meaning being created together?

Being aware of these questions assists in reflecting upon how listening is processed by the listener in terms of the factors moulding their perspective on the world.

Inquiry and Reflection

The next building block is that of Inquiry and Reflection.

Gerard and Teurfs (in Gozdz 1995:143-153) explore how, in dialogue, there is inquiry and questions asked to reach new levels of understanding. They talk about how joint inquiry occurs to make thinking processes visible to ourselves and to others, rather than assuming that automatically knowing what is meant or intended. Inquiry is also carried out to learn, rather than to make points or to confirm our own assumptions. Inquiry occurs from

a place of genuine curiosity and wondering. Focusing on penetrating questions opens the way for seeing things with new eyes.

This process is demonstrated by *Interviewee 3* who saw it as important to ask good questions to seek people to reflect: “Dreaming of the future, what could be your great threat?” “Where have you seen ideas turned into actions?”

Similarly for *Interviewee 6* who asked of a group of people: “How are we going to create opportunities for involvement?”

Also for *Interviewee 1* who asked in a community consultation: “What do you actually think about it? What are your reflections on it?”

Bennett and Brown (in Chawle & Ranesh 2006:167) also write of practice as, “*Inquiring* into our most critical challenges and simultaneously *noticing* the way we think about them has the potential to yield insights which neither can do alone”. Reflection is also necessary for learning and creating meaning. Stepping back and looking again at what is happening, it is thought about what it means to us now. It is learnt to work with silence and slow down the conversation in order to pay attention to our internal processes and patterns. Reflection allows for turning things over in creative ways and improving the quality of thinking together.

Shift happens

The description thus far suggests a gaining of insight and noticing how our perception might change and *Interviewee 3* provides examples of how this change takes place: “ In response to the facilitator at a cultural planning workshop an Aboriginal woman said, ‘ This has nothing to do with my life’ and an old farmer said ‘Then we had better change it’ (the process in the workshop) and they did”.

The same Interviewee gave the story: “One of the issues was security in shops. You had Aboriginal people who were really pissed off about the level of harassment they and their kids got in shops and the shop keepers were really pissed off that young Aboriginal kids shoplifted. Once they realised this, the dialogue started and in an hour they were great mates and they had worked out all these things that they wanted to happen to resolve the situation”.

Isaacs (1993: 116-117), explores this process, believing that dialogue itself requires shifts in personal perception and how to relate to others and the world.

As Isaacs points out, ‘we must change our stance and shift from one of: certainty to uncertainty. arrogance to humility competence to vulnerability knower to learner hearing to listening foreground to background fragmentation to wholeness disembodied observer to mindful participant.’

This last building block is the one that provides the opportunity for learning and developing. The concepts suggest a movement towards becoming more open to change, suggestion, involvement, relationship and reaching out together.

The process of understanding change through the use of the term dialogue is elaborated further by theorist and philosopher, Bakhtin (Hirschkop, 1999:48). He like those interviewed, also concentrated his theories primarily on the concept of dialogue, but in addition he talked of language (that is any form of speech or writing) as always potentially being a dialogue. For Bakhtin, dialogue consists of three elements: a speaker, a listener/respondent and a relation between the two. He said that language (and what language says, for example ideas, characters, forms of truth); is always the product of the interactions between (at least) two people. Bakhtin contrasts the notion of ‘dialogue’ with the idea of ‘monologue,’ the latter he sees as utterances by a single person or entity. For Bakhtin, dialogue is a communicative interaction between speaker and listener, rather than a persuasion directed by the speaker to the listener, as described by the earlier mentioned dynamics of the casework relationship writers as a monologue.

Like the interviewees descriptions of listening, Bakhtin (1981:672[b]673) discusses the idea of dialogue, or dialogic, stating that all words or utterances are directed toward an answer, a response. In everyday speech, words are understood by being taken into the listener’s own conceptual system, filled with specific objects and emotional expressions, and being related to these; the understanding of an utterance is thus inseparable from the listener’s response to it. All speech is thus oriented toward what Bakhtin calls the “conceptual horizon” of the listener; this horizon is comprised of the various social languages the listener inhabits/uses. Dialogism is an orientation toward the interaction between the various languages of a speaker and the languages of a listener. This is why Bakhtin (1981[b]:673) says that “discourse lives on the boundary between its own context and another, alien, context.”(Bakhtin 1981: 673)

So language itself, of course, is not a neutral medium which can be simply appropriated by a speaker, it is something that comes populated with the intentions and interpretations of others. Every word tastes of the contexts in which it has lived, its socially-charged existence. Bakhtin (Wales in Peer1988) stressed the multi-layered nature of language, which he called heteroglossia

and acknowledged that in language there are not only social dialects, jargons, turns of phrase characteristic of the various professions, industries, commerce, of passing fashions, etc., but also socio-ideological contradictions carried forward from various periods and levels in the past.

So Bakhtin's emphasis is on the listener's conceptual horizon, whilst Gerard and Teurf (1995) are more about the self-gaining insight and about the actual joining process. Bakhtin's emphasis is far more on both relationships meeting; the first taking greater steps to understand the 'other'. He suggests three contexts: the self, the other and dialogue – whilst Gerard and Teurf look at self and collective thinking.

There are many considerations in understanding dialogue. Whilst dialogue is about understanding language in terms of the intentions and the influences upon those involved, the framework of building blocks of dialogue also assists in understanding how the process can intentionally move from listening through to achieving change. But what links this change to achieving positive change?

Doing Good In Relationships.

Bakhtin (Hirschkop, 1999: 48) explicitly identified that his values in the process of change through dialogue were primarily “concerned with ethics and the act” in terms of democracy. Similarly many of those interviewed identified that their processes sought to do good through change and *Interview 8* clearly stated “My work is about doing good. Doing bad can be recognised because it is self-serving”

Whilst *Interviewee 2* observed of participants “Without fail they all wanted to do something positive for their community. I thought it extremely positive towards some sort of democratic ideal”.

Relationships can of course be categorised according to their role and function, by means of sociological criteria, from an ideological viewpoint. Yet whilst this chapter is about the practice of community development and consequently from an ideological standpoint about doing good; Bateson, Jackson, Haley and Weakland (1956:251-264) do throw some light over how language is crucial when used in relationship building. To highlight this they explore how the opposite results, that is the negative or relationships that do 'bad' and are self-serving. They look at the opposite of doing good in relationships providing examples of how behaviour seeking to do good can go wrong and should be avoided. They look at how language is used in its role of building contradictory or poor relationships, rather than predictable positive ones. They use the term 'double bind', being a dilemma in

communication in which an individual receives two or more conflicting messages, with one message negating the other, which creates a situation where a successful response to one results in a failed response to the other. They found that destructive double binds were a frequent pattern of communication among families of patients with schizophrenic disorders, and they proposed that growing up amidst perpetual double binds or conflicting messages could lead to learned patterns of confusion in thinking and communication. Hence this communication does not fit well with the earlier noted definition of dialogue which relies on an understanding and predictability; in fact it is the antithesis. Bateson et al (1956) confirm the complexity of human communication with 90% of it being nonverbal and that context is an essential part of it. Communication consists of the words said, tone of voice, and body language. It also includes how these relate to what has been said in the past; what is not said, but is implied; how these are modified by other nonverbal cues, such as the environment in which it is said.

The confusion experienced by the person in the mentioned resultant double bind relationship can be understood in looking at Haley's (1990:11) relationship categories, where Haley defined relationships as either being complementary or symmetrical. A symmetrical relationship is one in which the two parties match behaviours. What is emphasized in symmetry is how they are alike. The resultant relationships tend to be competitive. On the other hand, a complementary relationship is one in which the behaviours complement each other. One person teaches and the other learns; there is a give and take between behaviours. It is suggested that schizophrenics, as children, experienced a great deal of confusion with regard to defining their relationships as either complementary or symmetrical. The person tries to make sense of the communication, but the language used produces huge dilemmas and contradictions; whilst the listener is looking for a connection, mutuality and relationship and he/she is confused as to the right response and whether to compete or to join. The result is behaviour that is 'out of the ordinary', defined as mental illness which is abnormal.

Complementary relationships are therefore the opposite of this and more in line with the outcomes that are sought from those relationships identified by Biestek's (1961:17) principles (see chapter 3), where complementary relationships appear to be appropriate. Indeed complementary relationships fit well with definitions of dialogic practice. But why should we build complementary relationships, rather than competitive or confusing relationships? Why should 'good' be done rather than 'bad'? This is a philosophical question.

The philosophical underpinnings behind complementary relationships, is well

developed by Emmanuel Levinas (in Bergo 1998:74) who taught of being called upon to undertake selfless responsibility for the welfare of others. His philosophy requires that ethics take precedence over philosophical enquiry. Because of our humanity, our subjectivity, there is a necessary and multi-faceted responsibility for the Other. As soon as being faced with the 'face' there is an obligation to do something to help; which Levinas saw as 'a responsibility for the Other which arrives before the Other has had the time to demand anything' (p 74). So in this Levinas suggests there is an intention to do good at the time of the first encounter. This is also in itself a moral question – because there is the capacity to make a choice as to whether to respond or not and this then makes the question of whether to respond a moral question. If it is chosen to ignore the obligation, the obligation remains. There is much that can be said of our obligations, but obligation is surely to do good, and not to do bad. That obligation is to foster goods – good things, in the more general definition of the term – and not to foster bads (Millett 2006). Here Millett was discussing public administration and the good was about public goods, in this sense it was public goods such as clean water, clean air, sound education as opposed to public bads such as poor water quality, air pollution and poor education etc. The parallel can be drawn with Powell and Geoghegan (2004:267) where their research reports that community practitioners see the good in terms of community development as democratising democracy in a generally socially inclusive form. Responsibility and obligation for the writers in both contexts is similar; to work towards sustainable communities that allow people to enjoy a decent quality of life, rather than the opposite.

The initial response to the other and do good, is what I see as the relevant philosophy and ethics of micro practice and is indeed at the essence of the 'social' process. Yet despite this, there is still very poor understanding of what actually happens in this process, the social. It is as though, because everybody considers that they build relationships, there is no need to explore it. Yet how is 'it' actually done? What is consciously done in this dialogue when judgements are suspended, -listening, - respecting the other and our moral obligation of doing good is being met?

Complementary Relationships (*I-Thou*) – *The Encounter*

Whilst Gerard and Teurfs (in Gozdz 1995) described some of what they called the Building Blocks of dialogue, what is actually happening in this encounter or process they refer to? This section looks for literature that might assist in understanding the formative aspects of the encounter.

Martin Buber (2002:250-251) worked upon what he described as 'existence as

an encounter'. His concept of 'I and Thou' is part of his contribution to understanding the dialogic process. He explained this encounter as a philosophy using the pairs of *Ich-Du* (I-You or Thou) and *Ich-Es* (I-It), to categorise the modes of consciousness, interaction and in going through what an individual experiences when engaging with other individuals (the Thou), and inanimate objects (It). These concepts were explored earlier in the section on Social Science and Micro Practice, where Buber (in Friedman 1960:62) related that the I in the I-It relationship paid the price of selfishness and became isolated and alienated from the sources of life, whilst in the I-thou relationship people come together and experience each other at a deep personal level. This is what Buber calls genuine dialogue (in Friedman 1960:101) where he likens the process as genuine love; 'experiencing the other side is the essence of all genuine love'. So while 'the eros of monologue is a display or enjoyment of subjective feelings,' (the I-It); 'the eros of dialogue, on the other hand, means turning of the lover to the beloved in his other themes', (the I-Thou), 'his independence, his self- reality and with all the power of intention of his heart' (p102). Continuing this parallel, Buber says that love without dialogic[...] is evil because it is monological (p103). So this deep personal experience of the I-thou relationship occurs when there is true dialogue and a process of 'othering' has occurred. An experience of meaningful relationship for both parties is felt in a knowing of themselves and the other, experiencing both at the same time as a 'We'.

So for Buber it is necessary to go through dialogue in a joining of I to You (Thou), in order to commence a deep personal relationship and an experience of WE, rather than the alienated experience of the I-It relationship. So is this then the moment of relationship? This is indeed Kelly & Sewell's (1988:60) proposition for whom the I- You relationship is reaching out beyond the boundaries of the self to connect with another. The I-You is an important step in the psycho social development of an individual and the starting point of social relationships. It is possible in the I-You to check out shades of meaning and refinements of feeling, to negotiate commitment, and in various ways to attend closely and exclusively to the self and the other. This is very similar to Gerard and Teurf's already mentioned Building Blocks of Dialogue and also Haley's complementary relationship category.

Burkett and Kelly (2004:57) suggest this process can be understood through the following framework: beginning with a notion of *It*, the non-human world which is physical context and substance. There is next a movement to *I* (the sense of self and identity), then a movement to *I-You* (partnership and dialogue with another), then to

I-You-We (a threefold relationship in which no one person can control all

relationships).

For Buber (2002:250-251) the I-Thou is Kelly & Sewell's I-You and I-You-We, where there is a relationship that stresses the mutual, holistic existence of two beings, e.g two lovers or two strangers in a train. In fact Buber argues that the I-Thou relationship is the only way in which it is possible to interact with the ultimate figure in God.

Similarly for Booth (2006:113) who noted with abhorrence what he saw as today's tendency to fail to acknowledge the intimate being of another person, also identifies with both Buber and Levinas' relationship building, this time as 'respect for another'. By 'respect' Booth means going beyond what is on the surface and acknowledging the person's depths, even before these are explored. This respect appears to give impetus to a positive relationship developing. He goes on to say that 'this intimacy can only be based on intuition of how events have affected a person, i.e. on some insight into their experiences, how they have come to be opened up to the world.' Again Booth's description is one of intimacy and the WE experience.

On the contrary, whilst two beings actually encounter each other in the I-Thou relationship, in the I-It relationship the beings do not actually meet. This is very different and instead the 'I' confronts and qualifies an idea, or conceptualisation of the being in its presence and treats that being as an object. All such objects are considered merely mental representations, created and sustained by the individual mind. Therefore, the I-It relationship is in fact a relationship with oneself; hence *it is not a dialogue, but a monologue*, and there is no experience of WE. Buber (in Friedman 1960:37) argued that this paradigm devalued not only existence, but the meaning of all existence, so the encounter in this setting is experienced as a less positive one.. He saw the I-It relationship as characterised by the objectification and control of people and nature. The 'I' in this relationship seeks to acquire and possess as much as it can and perceives itself as being an individual. However, this 'I' pays a price for such selfishness and will to dominate because it is isolated and alienated from the source of life. This relationship includes mundane acts such as mass consumption, industrial production and societal organisation, as indicated by Layard (2006), Hamilton (2003) and Eckersley (2005) in their analysis of materialism, the demise of religion etc. However, Buber did not consider the 'I-It' world to be evil in and of itself, instead he observed that 'we all relate to that which is outside of us, even to ourselves, as objects and we could not live unless we, to some extent, manipulated nature to meet our basic needs.' The problem is to do this in proportion and if we allow the 'I-It' way of viewing the world to dominate our thinking and actions, we will be spiritually emaciated and pauperised, and live lives of quiet desperation, which leads us back to the earlier quote by Buber (in Friedman 1960:62) about

how the world has abdicated all before it.

Buber (1974) in direct comparison to the world of 'I-It', interprets the I-Thou relationship as an authentic or deeper way of relating to the world, a positive encounter and he describes this as a meeting, not only of minds but of souls, of wills, of that which reside at the core of one's being, "When you say 'Thou' to another person, you are sharing the mystery of your being, you are responding with the totality of self to the Thou who is addressing you, you are meeting one another on the level of spirit" (p11). Buber goes on to define spirit as the phenomenon which arises between two people who meet one another on the 'I-Thou' level, through which they become a person (as opposed to an alienated and isolated individual) when they enter into relation with people. This level of spirit closely identifies with Booth's earlier description and matches well with the data obtained from those interviewed for this research.

Interviewee 1 reflects Buber's 'I-Thou' in his/her practice and describes what s/he feels when joining with others in their work. The description is full of positive emotion:

"The joining through that common interest is experienced as a 'spark', 'relationship', 'spirit' or 'love'. For example with colleagues there is spiritual feeling in both the colleague and the self - 'the whole group of us (community workers) met and there was a feeling of spirit - the 'spark'... ---you can see it in their eyes.....you can observe ..feel...it is a warmth, passion, excitement, enthusiasm. My colleague talks of 'unwrapping the spirit'... it is about the person - the inner being. To me it is binding together, it is about the heart, it is the 'unwrapping' potential (the heart) - which is alongside the intellect - it is the spirit of the person. It taps into the deepest things. It is about VALUES..... You feel the energy - which gives resources - through generating a whole lot more energy"

Whilst in the 'I-Thou' relationship human beings are aware of each other as having a unity of being, they do not perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, rather they engage in a dialogue involving each other's whole being. I-thou is a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity, while I-It is a relationship of separateness and detachment.

This mutuality and reciprocity is reflected in Levinas' (1979) observation of the "I- Thou", where for him the self is only possible with its recognition of the "Other", a recognition that carries responsibility toward that which is irreducibly different. However, unlike Buber, Levinas' emphasis in the 'I-Thou' relationship is one primarily of respect and responsibility for the other person rather than a relationship of mutuality and dialogue.

Bakhtin (Morson and Emerson 1990:166) introduces a similar model of the human psyche and for him consists of three components: “I –for-myself”, “I-for-the-other” and “other-for-me”. For Bakhtin the I-for-myself is an unreliable source of identity, and he argues that it is only through the ‘I-for-the-other’ that human beings develop a sense of identity because it serves as an amalgamation of the way in which others view ‘me’. Bakhtin’s ‘I-for the other’ suggests a similar interpretation as Kelly & Sewell (1988:60), where they believe the sense of identity occurs. Indeed all of the writers suggest this sense of identity is only possible when relating to the other, Levinas would argue that ‘I for myself’ does not exist – as ‘I’ only exist for the ‘other’. Whilst Buber’s ‘other-for-me’ describes the way in which others incorporate my perceptions of them into their own identities. Identity, as Bakhtin describes it, does not belong merely to the individual, rather it is shared by all (Morson and Emerson 1990:50).

Indeed, Bakhtin’s philosophy greatly respected the influences of others on the self, not merely in terms of how a person comes to be, but also in how a person thinks and how a person sees himself or herself truthfully in terms of identity. These influences potentially affect therefore the nature of the encounter. He found in Dostoevsky’s work (Bakhtin1984), a true representation of polyphony, that is many voices.¹⁰ Bakhtin saw the dialogized or dialogical rhetoric as not only a multiplicity and diversity of voices, a “heteroglossia”, but an act of (and an active) listening to each voice from the perspective of the others.(Morson and Emerson 1990: 130-31).

Carnival – The Encounter Relationship Among Many Voices

The encounter can be scrutinised further from the ‘I-Thou’ event into its micro elements Bakhtin (Clark & Holquist 1984:302) looks at encounter and coins the term carnival. Carnival, he said, was the process that allowed the true experience of the encounter. According to Bakhtin; *carnival* is the context in which distinct individual voices are heard, flourish and interact together. The carnival creates the threshold situations where regular conventions are broken and reversed and genuine dialogue becomes possible. He saw in carnival each individual character being strongly defined and at the same time the reader witnessing the critical influence of each character upon the other; that is the voices of others are heard by the individual, and each inescapably shapes the character of the other.

¹⁰ Bakhtin also briefly outlined the polyphonic concept of truth and criticized the assumption that, if two people disagree, at least one of them must be in error. For Bakhtin, truth is a number of mutually addressed, albeit contradictory and logically inconsistent, statements. Truth needs a multitude of carrying voices. It cannot be held within a single mind, or expressed by a single mouth. He does not mean to say that many voices carry partial truths that complement each other, or that a number of voices when simply averaged or synthesised make the truth – but it is the fact of mutual engagement and commitment to the context of real-life event, that distinguishes truth from untruth

As a way of life, carnival is the expression of universal freedom: “Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time, life is subject only to its’ laws, that is the laws of its own freedom” (Bakhtin 1984 [a]: 7). This notion of Carnival therefore shapes the initial encounter.

Whilst none of those interviewed identified carnival as such, from my analysis of the interviews, the phenomenon of carnival can be identified:

Interviewee 3: “The beauty and challenge is the complete unpredictability”. “There are massive fights including troubled relationships between Aboriginal and non Aboriginal people. The CEO says that you can’t say that. It is really awful there is a huge meeting and I am bleeding away and then finally this old Aboriginal guy puts his hand on my arm and said ‘Don’t do this to us again, don’t deny our truth’ We got somewhere”.

Interviewee 5: “we go into communities where everyone is baying for blood”. Mikhail Bakhtin’s *Rebelais and His World* offers up a dialogically theoretical excursion into this world of ‘other’ with images of carnival. “The carnival offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things” (Bakhtin 1984 [b]:34) The Renaissance carnival that was being described by Rebelais and Bakhtin, was very different to the present day modern carnival, as the Renaissance carnival involved the temporal suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among people and of all prohibitions of usual life. Those that lived the carnival immersed themselves in the frolicking physical mutilation, bingeing and primordial gaiety that was carnival. This could be seen as a large scale phenomenon, not unlike a combination of Gerard and Teurf’s *Building Blocks* described earlier.

Bakhtin (1984 [b]:177) saw carnivalisation as making it possible to extend the narrow sense of life. He saw dialogism as a fundamental aspect of carnival; a plurality of ‘fully valid consciousness’ each bringing with them a different point of view, a different way of seeing the world. According to him (Bakhtin 1984[b]: 252) “two voices is the minimum for life, the minimum for existence”. He elaborates (Bakhtin 1984 [b]:56) “two voices come together in the free and frank communication that carnival permits and although each retains its own unity and open totality they are mutually enriched”. Levinas’ emphasis on orientation does not seem to be far from not just Bakhtin’s carnival and Buber’s position when considered in the light that Buber’s original relation refers to the “I-Thou”. However, for Levinas there is a longing for relation. For Levinas, the symmetry of sociality is founded upon the asymmetry of the ‘face-to-

face', the reciprocity of equality upon the prior establishment of difference.

In the formative work before relationships are formed is it a case of entering the world of the 'Other' or is it a process of carnival – i.e. where there is a meeting in a ground of no restrictions, an ideological void?

Carnival certainly fits as a place where the other's 'otherness' is experienced. It is a true place of encounter. However, it is not a place of respect or responsibility for the other. To me it appears a truly hectic place, a place of freedom that is devoid of ideology, where the experience of face to face is like Levinas' conceptualisation; seeing a reciprocity of equality upon the prior establishment of difference. To me it suggests the initial spark or moment of relationship before the difference is experienced. It is when the difference is experienced that respect can be introduced and a direction for the relationship. Whilst both Buber and Levinas are concerned with the priority of sociality, Buber locates the basis for sociality within the "I-thou" relation itself, where for Levinas it has yet to be established (Bernasconi 1988: 101).

From Encounter to Relationship

Martin Buber (2002) was fascinated with the processes *by which people build relationships with each other*. Consequently he identified three connected and enfolding movements in dialogue with one another that make the strands with which the bonds of connections with each other are woven. These movements form the very basis of building developmental relationships (Burkett and Kelly 2004:42), and are readily identified as in common use by those interviewed. Buber's observations can be summarised as process of:

- **First movement:** we make ourselves present to the another, or others. Here we say hello, say who we are and why we are here. The data we use, and the perspective is ours. "I" dialogue.
- **Second movement:** when the person responds to our presence. They are responding to us, they may welcome or ignore or warn that all is not well etc. The data is theirs, but a strand of connection is ours, because their response is linked to our presence. [This is what Kelly & Sewell (1988:60) would see as the "I-You"].
- **Third movement:** our response to the response. This is a movement full of artistry, sensitivity, challenge and craft. It plays a major part in shaping the nature and success of the work. In the third movement we enter the world of the people. That world may be one of welcome or scepticism but whatever its quality, we honour it, we attempt to understand what is happening, and with their permission move alongside them. We do not sustain (nor should we) this third movement forever, but it is an important

movement in terms of building a developmental relationship. [Finally this is Burkett & Kelly's "I-You-We" experience 2004:57]).

Whilst there is no suggestion that, as result of this third movement, there is a sound understanding of the other, many of those interviewed found this process a useful way of understanding relationship building practice.

Interviewee 3 directly acknowledges the usefulness of Buber's process:

"Yes, I use Buber's 'third movement' both in my community development practice and in my social work practice all the time. It is about hearing what they say and responding to what they say. There is a 'warmth' to the process and this 'warmth' is about acknowledgement, it is a feeling that they get but also I get through working with them. Acknowledgement is about recognising people. It is about valuing what a person has to offer. Acknowledgement is a public thing, being valued, respected.

The third movement is responding to their response, genuinely responding to their response. It is so integrated into what I do that I don't even think about churning it out in my description. But in my casework if I do not use the third movement I am not responding to my clients either. That's where I find it's an integrated part of my framework and it is in my practice. It is all about: what is their history? If I don't hear what their situation is and respond to their suggestions then I am not actually becoming congruous between what I am saying and what I am doing."

Interviewee 3 also enthusiastically describes his/her breakthrough experience of using Buber's process and training delivered by Tony Kelly: *"Tony Kelly's work is so explicit about how to work alongside ... It's very clear, very succinct and just made instant sense to me. It resonated. I guess I'd had enough experience at the time when I did the training ... I'd gone wrong previously ... then I had a breakthrough experience if you like. I suddenly understood where I had gone wrong. Previously, I had worked for example as a Children's Services Advisor where I worked with child daycare people. There were often times when they would say something and instead of using the third movement I would say 'oh well, have you tried?' - and you should see the shutters just go down. Or I would say something like "Well so and so does it this way" and the shutters would go down and I would know, but I wouldn't understand why. So when I was given that technique, (the third movement) I just went 'oh, that's what I'm doing wrong'."*

Buber's process is also authenticated through **Interviewee 7's** observations of their own practice: *"First you talk to somebody and say something about*

yourself. Then you listen to the other person saying something about themselves, before then trying to engage in dialogue in which you try to see through the eyes of that other person. So you are really a genuine listener, you are willing to demonstrate interest – the other person responds to that effectively. They respond positively to you because by looking through their own eyes they feel you have communicated ‘I like you because you are listening to me and I am listening to you and I am interested in what you are saying’.”

Bakhtin’s thoughts can also be seen in this process e.g. the first movement being ‘I- for-myself’; the second being a combination of ‘I-for-the-other’ and ‘the-other-for-me’ . Levinas would also say that this process does occur but he stresses the need to acknowledge an ethics or philosophy of obligation, or responsibility to the Other. He derives the primacy of his ethics from the experience of the encounter with the Other. For Levinas, the irreducible relation, the epiphany, of the face-to-face, the encounter with another is a privileged phenomenon in which the other person’s proximity and distance are strongly felt. “The Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity¹¹, not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness” (Levinas 1979:150).

In thinking about engagement and involvement, *interviewee 3* thinks about acknowledging people’s strengths and skills, which s/he sees as reinforcing them as they become built up in the process. In describing their work with the women who worked on parkland, this person identifies that when a section of their report about the park was sent to them to which they had contributed, they came back and said, “Did we really do all that?” S/he describes how this was such an affirmation for them to actually have had written down what things they had achieved:

“One of the things that I have found is that people have their own strengths and skills and by acknowledging and recognizing these individual strengths and by encouraging them to make use of them, it is a very positive way to engage with them as well as reinforcing their skills. Some people, when you talk to them, have ambitions that they would like to do something or lack confidence to actually take the step of making use of a skill that they have partially developed. By encouraging them to participate, making them develop skills by providing access to training or more information or by simple encouragement, like positive feedback, you are acknowledging them very much in terms of how they have contributed.

¹¹ *Alterity* is a philosophical term meaning “otherness”, strictly being in the sense of the other of two. It is generally taken as the philosophical principle of exchanging one’s own perspective for that of the ‘other’. The concept was established by Emmanuel Levinas in a series of essays, collected under the title “Alterity and Transcendence” (1999)

A personal acknowledgement can also do this, by giving verbal feedback to somebody that they have learned something and it has been positively received. It can be written in terms of a letter, acknowledging someone at a public meeting. When we held a public meeting in Northcliffe, the first thing we had up on the board was all of the things that the town actually had happening as the starting point. Acknowledgement that the community was already a busy community and was doing its best to look after itself was important, because if we had not acknowledged it, we would have denigrated what the people in the town were really doing. Other acknowledgements are things like press release, about things that have been achieved, or developing written and photographic records of what's been done.

There is a 'warmth' about acknowledgement. I mean I receive acknowledgement from the people that I work with, appreciation for the fact that I have assisted them. It's what keeps me involved and motivated in my work. I get recognition for the fact that I have offered something – it is a good feeling and keeps me involved too. If you're going to be genuine in your acknowledgement you must value what the person has offered. I mean acknowledgement to me is a public thing. It can be interpersonal but for people to learn, it comes down to the non-verbals as well as verbals; even that they treat each other with respect when they are working."

Interviewee 4 similarly notices the positive response from people when s/he 'attends' to their gifts and strengths:

"To me this process involves paying attention to people's gifts, strengths and passions – through which they appear to pay more attention to themselves and their own gifts. This is the work of empowerment and building, leadership. In doing this I attend, build connections and get them to dream on how they would love the world to be... So it is important to be ready and to actually respond to what is happening for the people that you are working with.

So, how do I attend? The technical answer would probably be, through good questioning (but I am never sure that it is that simple) and good yarning and good listening.

The space created, the middle, is the space for people to talk and listen. That dialogue is where everybody reflects and it brings new truth – which results in the dream and action. Joining in that space is about attending with soulful, genuine interest and draws us to a 'wholeness'. So through their interactions with each and me and through their actions they feel more spirited

Through using love as a framework, from your heart, soulful interest, that is genuine interest in human beings; that love as a force draws towards 'wholeness', which is also about equilibrium not hate."

Interviewee 7 also talks about 'truth' extensively as part of relationship building and how by attending (listening attentively) to others s/he begins to feel a sense of spirit:

"Joining is about identifying the truth for those you are working with. It is a combination of my truth and theirs – it is not just mine or theirs. Then by joining in the common task, it is about connection, feeling connected and the spirit feels alive."

Similarly, **interviewee 5** identifies a sense of worth, self-esteem and spirit as part of the joining experience:

*"Spirit is really, really, really important, because I think inside each human being is a notion that there is a nice spirit. People don't necessarily relate to it very well, but **spirit** is where people get their notion of self-esteem or worth or that sort of stuff from. So, if you like, spirit and spirituality can be separate. **This notion of spirit is about what is the thing which gives people the incitement to live. A lot of it is about being valued, a sense of purpose, respect, and all those types of things.** That is where a lot of the relationships are so important, because that is what really helps build that spirit inside people which can be a spirit inside a community."*

These previous sections have identified aspects of engagement and joining, from material gained in this research supported by the writings of theorists and philosophers. So why is there a need to carry out this research and identify successful practice? Well as already identified, there is a dearth of data describing successful practice. So what are the barriers that block the development of commonly accepted good practice?

Barriers to Entering the World of the Other

The above writers and thinkers have considerable agreement in describing the process of relationship building. Yet why do I observe from my experience that there is not a common approach by other practitioners, with the exception of those interviewed? These other practitioners are the ones whose practice requires expertise in these skills, yet they fail to acknowledge this and continue to practise what they profess to be 'engagement' without being able to clearly describe what they actually do.

My observation is that this entails a lack of ‘respect’ for the other in today’s society, which in turn results in a lack of alignment with sustainable practice reaching the stage where even practitioners from the human services are themselves culpable.

There are a number of reasons for this deficit from practitioners (Burkett & Kelly 2004:34). Many barriers can be attributed to the worker’s shortcomings in understanding themselves – that is the worker in their context. By this I mean:

Firstly there is **Professional training:** through which workers are defined and define themselves as ‘experts’, with a great deal of knowledge about things e.g. poverty; through which they bring professional biases into the work; such as the lenses through which they see the world, the result is that they can (and do) have blind spots.

Secondly there are **Personal agendas:** that is motivations and limitations behind their work. This includes the way agendas are carried, differing family backgrounds, the desire to really ‘make a difference’, to ‘fix’ things, and the limitations of our personal capacities. These all make a difference as to how joining might occur with people.

Thirdly there are the **Imperatives of the work:** which impinge upon practice through the agendas of the employing organisations. Consequently employing organisations influence the work through using funding guidelines, timeframes and tight objectives and, when responding to the ‘voice’ of the organisation rather than the ‘voice’ of the people.

Finally there is the **Who, when, where:** that is who is spoken to in a community, when it is visited and where people are met, these can all have a big impact on how joining occurs with people (Burkett & Kelly 2004:34).

Purposeful Relationship Building In Community Development

This chapter has looked at the encounter and the widely accepted understanding of Buber’s Third Movement. Yet how do successful workers identify what to do next? What is the most expedient practice for them to follow in their search for the commonalities that people might want to work in their relationship to one another?

As the trainer often identified to be effective by those interviewed, *Interviewee 8* summarises the purpose and action orientation of their work: “*My work is about hope*”

– a way forward. Whilst I believe that in development work, practice always needs to lead theory, at the same time I am firstly about head (thinking), before heart (feeling), so I analyse it first. My analysis is about ‘together we can do more’ which is about developing both our own and others spirit to live more fully. So whilst others have been more about engaging and listening to the people, I have always been about action, a way forward – hence the more Freirian orientation.”

The understanding of dialogue already covered,, makes it possible to perceptually slow down the action in order to *observe* it and understand more clearly how meaning is created, both individually and collectively. This slowing down reveals that during the process of building developmental relationships for community development, further difficulties and barriers can be encountered. For example:

- It is just not possible to respond to everything in our dialogue with another person. (Contrary to the ‘many voices’ of Bakhtin 1981).
- In terms of responding how are important aspects identified?
- Of all the words said and deeds done, what are the key words and symbols in our dialogue, what do they mean individually and collectively and even more importantly, can they reveal what should be done together to make the situation better?

This is where the work of Paulo Freire (1997:117-119), as mentioned by interviewee 8, helps in terms of furthering developmental relationships. Freire is like the writers already mentioned in that he advocated that people work *with* each other, rather than a person working *on* another. He also insisted that dialogue involved *respect*. In addition, he demonstrated a discourse on a theme of political education expanding upon the differences of an authoritarian ‘banking method’ of education versus a dialogical ‘problem posing’ education. This dialogical education theme is where his work proves most useful for this discussion.

What Paulo Freire (1997) opened up was the concept of key community words; ‘heuristic words’ or ‘heurisms’. Heuristic words are “community” words, for they mostly have many different meanings but somehow are understood well enough for people to share what others mean and so connect to and be with one another. Words like “love” or “war” or “land” or “home” are classic heurisms. Heuristic words are emotive, cultural, evocative; but they are also contextually dependent. These words are so central in the construction of meaning that they represent entry points that contain the seeds of potential joint action in any given dialogue. Because they are contextual

in nature, they give an opportunity to see into the world of those who are using them and their 'otherness'.

According to Burkett & Kelly (2004:51), in the normal course of conversation, when not pushing our own priorities, these heuristic words or sentences (or parts of sentences/phrases) are often intuitively picked up and responded to. More often than not what is responded to are those heuristic words or phrases that have the highest emotional negative content. From the insight of Freire it can be understood that certain words are more appropriate to developmental action, whilst others are more useful for service or counselling responses. The important task of the development worker is to hear and respond to the words which have **developmental** potential, that is those words that have both action and reflection embedded in them knowing that some have more reflection action potential than others.

It is necessary to carry out this identification following observations about the poor nature of modern relationships and many social analysts (Layard 2006; Hamilton 2004; Eckersley 2005) bemoaning the state of society whereby they see that material objects (the It) having taken the place of the real relationships (the I-Thou-We). As was seen earlier, the latter being more attributed to pre-industrial times (Tonnies 1995; see *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* in Chapter 3). A detailed understanding of how those 'real relationships' are established provides the groundwork and opportunity to develop training in relationship building for development workers in how to create better communities. Why should better communities be created? Levinas (1979:150) would say that there is an obligation to do good and respect the 'others' in the world. He would say that there is an obligation to create good and not bad, an argument with which few would disagree. He argues this being due to what he says is our humanity, our subjectivity and that there is a multi-faceted responsibility for the other, and in this ethics takes precedence over philosophical enquiry.

Booth (2006:114) describes the flow of this spiritual process which enhances others' lives: "respect for others' lives opens up their lived experience to companionable inquiry. When I say to you, 'how are you going?' I set the scene for more than a matter of manners. I open the door which may charm you with the time I spend with you, to listen, to invite you into a sharing in the whole of living that extends every person's sense of who they are and who they are becoming. Without that (charming) habit of taking time to listen – of letting you tell me who you are becoming – humanity is lessened. And paying less attention to humanity in the Westernised world is to be like the frog in the water of increasing temperature."

Summary

This chapter entitled 'Joining and Engagement' was intended to focus on developing micro practice, which was highlighted as a previously poorly studied aspect of practice. Some insights were provided on how important the understanding of the self as the practitioner is in effective practice. However, the main thrust was upon an understanding of the formative stages of relationship development which was named the 'encounter', with a detailed account of the dialogic process aimed at creating complementary relationships. Through the concept of complementary relationships, the language of understanding the 'other' was explored to portray what is being sought in the moment of the encounter. Some time is spent exploring this encounter; what happens in the self and the other as they experience a development of 'spirit' in the sometimes brief moment of feeling they join. This was followed by further micro analysis using Bakhtin's 'carnival' concept. Finally this led to further analysis of the formative process which introduced firstly Buber's 'third movement' and then a way forward through Freire's heuristics.

Joining and engaging to build relationships is crucial for effective community development. This micro practice of building these relationships is a crucial technique in the process of achieving good and meeting the needs of those with whom we work. In these terms the action is to do good. However, upon what is this good based; what are the values and ethics that drive the practitioners who strive to do good? For this we turn to the next chapter.

Chapter 5: VALUES & ETHICS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - *“THE SELF -THE PROFESSION - THE ORGANISATION”*

Values – Influences and Context

So far in this thesis there have been chapters which explored directly the research questions. Whilst in chapter one there was an elaboration of my own practice as derived from my life experience, chapter three analysed the research data and literature over the importance of relationship building in community development practice. Chapter four then explored both the literature and data from the research interviews relating to joining and engagement in terms of the encounter prior to relationship.

This next chapter explores the impact of values and ethics on practice which was highlighted during the course of the interviews. The process of drawing out and identifying values as a theme from the interviews is tabulated in the attachment (Analysis of Research Data: Appendix 2). In this chapter, my own experience is revisited along with those of the interviewees for the resultant values of the individual/ the self. This is followed by an exploration of the values of the community development profession. Then finally the values of public administration are looked at for their impact upon community practice. In exploring these values I am cognizant of the interplay and influence that all three sets of values have upon one another. The significant impact of that influence is described by one of the interviewees as the resultant ‘compromise’ which then largely determines the eventual possible community development outcome.

Chapter two on methodology already identified the importance of values in the methodology; it also identified the relevant framework for presenting this thesis as action learning; which is part of the action research family, and encompasses the values of ‘democracy, equitability, liberation and life enhancement’ (Stringer 1999:38). Identifying values as important to research is not unusual as all research is embedded within a system of values (Brydon-

Miller et al 2003:11). However once committed to this set of values as above, this form of research then needs to challenge unjust and undemocratic economic, social and political systems and practices.

This next chapter therefore is an exploration of what values and ethics are desirable to achieve a society that is, (as already identified), democratic, equitable etc. through effective community practice. It explores what individual community development workers see that motivates them, what are the values of the community development profession and the interplay of these with the values of the employing auspice.

Context and Structuration

The impact of values as social forces in practice is dependent, constrained and influenced by a number of factors.

This is highlighted in part by *Interviewee 1* who notes the interplay of some of the factors that shape practice. In this s/he reflects from their own sociological background upon the influences derived from sociologist Andrew Giddens:

“Giddens thinks in that kind of way ‘(the impact of large structural factors).’ It is the paradigm that he is holding. It is big picture stuff. It is still a kind of structural approach, but the interactionism is there. You know, we are basically born into a society with all its different parts, but through our lives we also change society. We both are the society and we change it to build another and hand it on; so those are big principles about Giddens in practice”

This interviewee is referring to Giddens’ Theory of Structuration (Giddens 1984:25) which I have also used as a framework to integrate this chapter. Giddens’ theory notes that social life is more than random individual acts, but is not merely determined by social forces. To put it another way, it’s not *merely* a mass of ‘micro’- level activity; though neither can it be studied through looking for ‘macro’-level explanations. Giddens suggests, human agency (being the individual) and the social structure are in a relationship with each other, and it is the repetition of the acts of individual agents which reproduces the structure. This means that there is a social structure - traditions, institutions, moral codes, and established ways of doing things; but it also means that these can be changed when people start to ignore them, replace them, or reproduce them differently.

Hence it is argued here that whilst the sense of values and self is determined

mainly by the individual as a moral issue, the form that this takes in practice may be modified to be appropriate for the larger context (Habermas 1987:100). So whilst the sense of self (the micro) may itself be clear, any modification might most likely be due for example; to the fact that most community workers are directly or indirectly employed through the public sector (either in government or non-government funded agencies). In this case the Public Sector as well as other macro features help to define the context and constraints, as well as being the sole influencing factor for some people. Consequently this larger context is explored in this chapter for its influence upon what is deemed as 'appropriate' practice, in delivering satisfaction to experienced community development workers in their work.

These various contextual influences on practice are emphasised in **Interview 6**, where, in reflecting on his /her work with property developers and how their priorities are affected by the need to ensure payment for the work, they need to take into account the employer's sense of what is important. This influence is noted to be substantial in that the interviewee says it results in compromising their work:

"Because of our values we are always working with compromise. Because the only way we are ever going to get any kind of legitimate community development done is when you are developing it where you are not actually beholden to anyone."

So yes, there are compromises. I mean that is the thing; that is the big question I have had throughout my professional career. I remember I had the same question when I was in the film industry. You can say, I have a philosophical difficulty in working with the enemy and therefore I will work in a not-for-profit organisation that isn't dependent on funding from anywhere. I can then go out and do things the way I think they should be done. However, the reality is I don't think there is a not-for-profit out there that isn't compromising because of the funding that it gets."

Interviewee 5 also acknowledges these influences arise as compromises to his/her values in work with real estate developers. S/he is also wary over the effects of the compromises: *"We are involved with those whose values include trying to make money, we are wary of developers wanting to learn community skills for their own short-term gains. Sometimes we have seen developers wanting to learn process and put it into a technical book and then the developed practices and procedures can take over the work, becoming its own uniform model, leaving behind the aspiration of the community."*

The already mentioned work of Giddens (1993:168) identifies 'structuration' as a process by which social scientists seek to interpret the world through a

‘Duality of Structure’, by which social practice then has both a structural and an agency component. The structural environment (that is the larger factors such as organisation, the economy etc.) constrains or compromises individual behaviours whilst also making it possible to carry out the work. It is because social actors are reflexive, that they filter back into the everyday world and monitor the ongoing flow of activities and structural conditions, that they adapt their actions to evolve and develop understandings. Giddens calls this two tiered interpretive and dialectical relationship between social scientific knowledge and human practices the “double hermeneutic”.

Stories, Values and the Self

The earlier chapter on “Methodology” identified bricolage as the main methodology, together with narrative analysis and enquiry and action/experiential learning as methods appropriate for this research. To do this it was noted that ‘bricolage makes use of philosophical research into the boundary between the social world and the narrative representation of it. Exploring this complex, ever shifting boundary between the social world and the narrative representation of it, philosophically informed bricoleurs begin to document the specific influences of life history, lived context, race, class, gender and sexuality on researchers and the knowledge they produce’ (Kincheloe 2004a:8). To carry this out in order to gather the data for this research, it was considered necessary to interview identified consultants to elicit what ways of working they found useful in their practice. To do this they had to start talking, or creating a narrative, about their practice.

As a result, stories in the form of narratives and quotations are therefore used in this current chapter, as they have been extracted from a narrative analysis of the research data, in their story form (Polkinghorne 1995:5-23). The narratives were collected from the research participants and a process of thematic analysis assisted to identify categories or themes for investigation. There is an Analysis (Appendix 2) at the rear of this thesis which includes details of the research data analysis, together with the thematic analysis. One of the themes identified was that of ‘values’.

Stories are used in this research because they are very important in shaping practice, lives and relationships. So the development of stories is a structuring of this narrative. This requires recourse to a selective process in which events are pruned, from our own experience, that do not fit with the dominant evolving stories around us (White & Epstein 1990:11). If it is accepted that persons organize and give meaning to their experience through the storying of experience, and that in the performance of these stories they express selected aspects of their lived experience, then it follows that these

stories are constitutive – shaping lives and relationships. People give meaning to their lives and relationships by storying their experience and, in interacting with others in the performance of these stories, they are active in the shaping of their lives and relationships.

This shaping can be seen with **Interviewee 3**: *“...for me community development is an egalitarian way of working, which to me is the main value behind the work. It also appeals to my feminist values. Feminism gave me a framework I suppose or a broader perspective on what my mother had brought me up with. My mother was a woman who was very egalitarian in her relationship with my father and feminist writers actually provided me with the political justification that I already believed.*

Also, I suppose I grew up with a framework which provided me with an expectation that people would be treated fairly and appropriately in a community where I had been well provided for. I remember the days of learning and being impressed about socialism; that the State should be supporting people to achieve their desires and that there should be support for people who aren't able to provide for themselves.”

In this extract, the interviewee has reflected how they carry out their community development practice in a way that is derived from their own background and values.

Similarly in interview, **interviewee 1** acknowledges his/her theoretical underpinnings as being from their sociological background together with experiences in teaching, rather than from community development. S/he relates that this background led the natural narratives in her/his practice: *“Sociology is the main determinant in my practice and my life experience and background lead me to the narrative approach. The narrative is something that has always been an easy way of working for me, a natural way of working. I strongly believe that practice derives from who the person is, which is a reflection of their values.”*

Interviewee 6 also notes her/his values and influences, acknowledging that this is reflected in the type of films that s/he was involved in making in an earlier employment: *“I was already passionate about the social issues, having wanted to make documentaries on social issues.”*

Having obtained reflections of what values they had and from where they were derived, I next look at my own experience to explore how I became interested in the place of values in effective community development practice.

My Interest in Worker Values

With a sociology background – which is one that started me thinking in terms of seeking an objective view, I have constantly looked at, and queried, people's actions, attitudes and what values these represent. This was no more so prevalent than when I was the Manager of the Department for Community Welfare, in the remote Kimberley region, (1985 - 1990), where I had 48 staff working with mainly Aboriginal people. In this employment I was responsible for managing the development and delivery of effective community practice.

In looking generally at people who were working with Aboriginal people, I began to wonder 'what made an effective worker?' I soon learnt that among these people who worked in the welfare industry and associated fields, there was already quite a mixture of individuals. To provide examples here; there were the so called 'do gooders' (i.e. people who wanted to do something for others, but had very little insight as to what they did and why); then there were religious fanatics (who might want to convert the locals to their religious convictions), and then there were the community workers (who seemed to be both skilled and balanced). There were also other staff/workers who would go 'native' i.e. they would appear to take on the values and lifestyle of the Aboriginal people who they worked with; they would take on a bush name and appear to become somebody different from who they had been when they arrived in the area.

Through realising there was such a mixture of people employed to work with Aboriginal people, I started to ask myself, 'How can I best assure that I appoint sound and skilled workers in this cross cultural setting?' This question led me to realise how important and serious was the selection process of new staff. After all if a mistake was made in staff appointments the organisation was generally stuck with them until they left 1, 2 or 3 years later. I relayed my observation and concerns to my line manager of the time, who suggested I use a staff selection questionnaire designed and developed by a departmental psychologist (personal communication from line manager about the psychologist, Feb 1986). I tailored this psychologist's questions for use in my own interviews and in particular I included the question "Tell me about your culture." This question was revealing when asked in interviews. It was designed to identify if the applicant in the interview situation was able to articulate a sound knowledge and grounding of their own culture and values, whatever they considered this to be; for example, feminist, or white middle class protestant. Indeed this drew out what I now understand as their sense of self. The rationale behind this was that if they had a sound grounding, having reflected upon their own background, then they may be able to be more objective in their practice of community development, i.e.

particularly in working with people who were from another culture. I used this process for a number of years and it certainly highlighted who were poorly grounded individuals. What it did do was that it drew out the values of the applicants. This is because many people love to talk about themselves and so the interview became their opportunity. Some were completely unaware of how inappropriate their observations might appear to me and other interview panel members. Those who were well grounded could relate from where their values had derived and clearly elaborated upon how they had reflected about their own personal and professional development.

The use of this psychologist's questions reinforced what I had earlier learnt through my own studies, when I had produced my Masters Thesis entitled "Towards Appropriate Social Work" (Oades,1985). In that research I was interested in the nature of effective communication and social work across culture. Integral to this understanding was Mir-Djalali (1980:301) who noted, "it must be remembered that not only should the client or client group's standpoint be researched but so too there should be a recognition and insight of the social worker's own values and culture".....he goes on to say "an awareness of social needs, with regard to different cultural elements and the ways in which we project our own cultural attitudes and understandings to others seem to be fundamental". So he too was emphasising the worker's insight into their own values and culture.

I was interested in cross cultural social work and from where the values of the worker came and where the values of their training came from, together with the derivation of the values of what appeared to be the more effective workers. Over a period of years I gained considerable experience in selecting staff. Sometimes I head- hunted them from reliable training institutions, where I had contacts that I knew could be relied upon for providing sound and relevant training and for giving me an honest opinion about their student. Yet despite the obvious skills that some of these students undoubtedly had, often there was something missing. I came to the conclusion that the training courses completed had not provided the students with the opportunity, or the necessity, of reflecting and exploring about themselves and their values i.e. who the students were themselves as people.

Values in Community Development Work

Why was I so interested in the workers' values? Well, as is highlighted by Ife (1995:254) 'community work by its very nature cannot be a value free technical activity. The very act of community work implies certain values, such as the value of democracy, participation, self-determination, and so on.'

These implied values are echoed by *interviewee 6*: “For me the real drivers are social justice, equity, and the right to self-determination.”

Ife (1995:254) balances these implied values with the effects of what he calls personal worker values, “Any community worker will also approach the task with a set of personal values, and some of these may well be seen by others to be opposed to community work values (e.g. abortion) and can bring with them major community conflict for the worker.”

Interviewee 6 again provides evidence of this: “My ideas about doing ‘good’, my values and philosophy all come from my strong faith in God. By the common good, I mean compassion from the heart.” As suggested earlier with Ife’s abortion example, some views as in these religious ones and values, can potentially lead to conflict with the community.

Ife (1995:255) reinforces the idea of this potential conflict of personal and professional values,, and looks at the imposition of the worker’s values on a community, especially when they are working with a disempowered group on a consciousness raising model¹². However, Flyvberg (2001:162) suggests a way around this problem by having the worker ask what he calls four value rational questions, to clarify the values and use of power by the worker. Firstly the worker should ask:

‘Where are we going?’ Next: ‘Who gains, and who loses, by which mechanisms of power?’ Then: ‘Is it desirable?’ Finally: ‘What should have been done?’ These questions can then be reflected upon by the worker to understand whether the resultant impact of their work is what they are seeking to achieve. Ife (1995) also provides suggestions, recommending that the consciousness raising model can be clarified and made more effective by following the guidance of both Fay (1975:108- 110) and Freire (1972:60-61), who themselves identify the importance of ensuring the development of a dialogical relationship, whereby consciousness raising is not seen as a one-way process, but rather a two-way dialogue whereby each party equally shares perspectives, understandings and world views in such a way that both learn from the process and together develop a deeper understanding.

Thus through this the approach of the community worker is not one of superiority, but rather one of a human being seeking to engage in dialogue with another human being, where each will respect the other’s wisdom, and

¹² A consciousness raising model for Ife (1995: 148) is aimed at helping people to understand how their personal experiences are affected by larger structural factors.

where the goal is to develop together a new understanding that will lead to action.

Through this, Ife (1995:254), and those interviewed, have identified that community development requires certain value positions, including those of participatory democracy, non-violent change, social justice, and so on. In this sense community work is a process of advocating and imposing certain values, about which Ife says a community worker need not be apologetic. It is therefore important for a worker to make a clear distinction between those values which are inherent in community development and those which are not. It is essential that the community worker be able to think through these value dilemmas clearly, and have a good analysis of what values are critical to the community development process, and what values are essentially personal and must not be imposed on others.

Ife (1995:256-261) does elaborate further upon these dilemmas, saying that community workers come across four types of ethical dilemmas: conflicts with the community; conflicts with employers or funding bodies; issues of information and communication; and laws and regulations. He believes that there is no easy answer when dealing with these dilemmas and that in each case the worker needs to make a moral judgement, which will be based upon moral principles and practical exigencies.

Generally he believes that:

1. It is important to have clearly thought through one's moral justification for any action, and to have a set of guiding principles. The worker who does not have such a background is likely to make inappropriate decisions. (Hence Ife believes a sense of self to be important as well as a moral position, plus a clear idea of the values inherent in community development.)
2. The decision must be based upon a realistic assessment of the situation at hand, including the likely consequences for the people involved, the worker and the community programme. (This is in line with Flyvberg's earlier questions.)
3. Many potential ethical conflicts can be avoided if the community worker is aware of the dangers and is able to set a clear set of rules and expectations for themselves and for others. (Whilst this is about clarity – it is also about relationship building through predictability, and honesty.)
4. Where possible the community worker should own and deal with the moral/ethical dilemma, rather than becoming the scapegoat.
5. Principles of openness, honesty, integrity and non-violence must underpin all ethical decisions, and these must only be violated if the worker is convinced that there are strong moral and practical reasons for doing so. (This is where a worker might compromise their sense of self,

provided there are strong moral and practical reasons to do so in terms of the inherent values of community development.)

Through elaborating upon these dilemmas, Ife (1995) is stating that there are definite principles involved in community work, which are both moral and practical. At the same time the worker needs to know his/her own values and how they affect what they are doing in their practice. So they need a sense of self that assists them in making moral judgements.

The Person in the practice

A Sense of Self – Knowing Who You Are

One of the most common reflections in the research interviews was upon this sense of self and its impact upon practice:

Interviewee 2 enthusiastically shows some of his/her values as they flow into practice: *“I thought it (community consultation) was fantastic. I thought that, without delving into politics and stuff, it was an extremely positive step forward in that sort of democratic ideal, you know, of people being involved in the direction of their own future, and their own community.”*

Whilst **Interviewee 4** indicates that s/he has thought in depth about their ‘self’ in their practice, providing a rationale behind the sense of self: *“for me good workers have a strong sense of self and are ‘fully’ themselves; to be fully yourself is the centre of my micro process.”*

This interviewee then expands on this understanding: *“Very influential on me was a book called, *The Courage to Teach* by Parker J Palmer. He talked to a lot of students, about who in the past had been influential teachers for them. It could have been primary school, university, or whatever. He started to get a picture and he said that there was not a technique that those influential people had in common, that is those people who were the most inspiring. What they did have in common was that they were being fully themselves when they were teaching.”*

When asked what helps one have a strong sense of self, **Interviewee 4** continued; *“I think it is a framework that you believe in and that you know has value. For example, both Christians and feminists have a framework and they are strong.”*

What exactly do people mean when they speak of the self? For Vilayanur (2003) the self has four defining characteristics:

“First of all, continuity. You’ve a sense of time, a sense of past, a sense of

future. There seems to be a thread running through your personality, through your mind. Second, closely related is the idea of unity or coherence of self. In spite of the diversity of sensory experience, memories, beliefs and thoughts, you experience yourself as one person, as a unity. So there's continuity, there's unity. And then there's a sense of embodiment or ownership, yourself as anchored as your body. And fourth is a sense of agency, your sense of being in charge of your own destiny" (p.1).

McNiff (in Clandinin 2007:314) states that she works from a sense of self as outlined by Vilayanur and has a great belief in others, that everyone can think for themselves and have a sense of themselves. She goes on to say: 'We are born with the capacity to think, to make choices and to reflect critically on our actions. We are moral creatures, fully equipped to exercise our agency by acting on our decisions. In professional life, practitioners are fully equipped to make their own decisions about practice and show how they hold themselves accountable for the consequences of those decisions' (p314).

Giddens (1991:70) portrays a more dynamic picture of self in the form of continual development and adaptation; 'A person's identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor important though it is – in reactions of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day to day world, cannot be wholly fictive. The biography, (or sense of self), must continually integrate events which occur in the external world and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about self.' So for Giddens, we create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narrative, social roles and lifestyles; of who we are and how we came to be where we are now. The self is not something that people are born with, it is not fixed and it is not an objective description of that person. Giddens argues that the self is 'made' by the individual and self-identity becomes something that the person is actively aware of, it is made and thoughtfully constructed by the individual. There is a choice about lifestyle; for example consumerism is one of the ways in which to project and develop lifestyle.

Giddens (1991:70), revisits similar processes identified as 'gemeinschaft and gesellschaft' earlier by Tonnies (in Nisbet 1970:74). Here it is conveyed how earlier societies with a social order based firmly in tradition would provide much of a persons 'sense of self' because individuals had (more or less) clearly defined roles, whereas in post-traditional societies there is a need to work out our roles for ourselves. This leads to the questions: 'What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity - and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day- to-day social behaviour. Even those who would say that they have never given any thought

to questions or anxieties about their own identity will inevitably have been compelled to make significant choices throughout their lives, from everyday questions about clothing, appearance and leisure to high-impact decisions about relationships, beliefs and occupations. These choices all contribute to the sense of self.

The following extract from *Interview 4* shows how this person has reflected on how their values affect their actions in practice, and clearly identifies how this process is affected by the context of the work: *“So in terms of justice, it is not about being nice to people, but more about moving towards an equilibrium, for example of resources. For me it is a way of checking how well things are, for where ‘justice’ comes in that involves notions of good and bad. This equilibrium is based upon the ‘context’ that is being experienced, not some overall blanket concept of equilibrium, across the world, as that would be impossible. I see equilibrium as an attainable thing, so it is justice in that setting, it is part of developing spirit – because a lack of spirit is part of the need for equilibrium, where there are underlying injustices.”*

This practitioner sees their own sense of self as one striving for a sense of what they see as justice in the context where they are working. They strive to do this through seeking movement towards justice, which is being informed by notions of good and bad. How well developed a sense of spirit becomes indicates to them how good an outcome has been achieved.

In terms of values, it has been identified that there are values associated with community development. How community development is performed is also determined by the worker’s own sense of self and the values associated with that self. Another factor is that of the term community and what is meant by ‘good’ in that context.

A Normative Framework For Community Development Practice.

The Common Good and the Self in Practice

As a researcher and practitioner of community practice, I have a sense of self and I seek to understand the values of other practitioners. Why do I seek this understanding? I have had a long involvement with community development and how people might create a sense of community for their own sustainable future. Over time, in reflecting on this type of community development, I have become convinced that the values and ethics brought by the workers to their work, are a very significant aspect to the nature of what outcomes are achieved, as indeed has already been reflected

by the earlier mentioned writers. Why is this my belief? The term 'community' tends to drive the focus of what has been generally understood by 'community development', and according to Frazer (1999:76), community itself, can be thought of in terms of value; as such it may well be used to bring together member elements from a number of member elements; for example combining solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust. To me this reflects what is sought in trying to do 'good' (in the same manner achieved through the use of the moral terms associated with the 'good' in the French Revolution by fraternity; liberty and equality). So for community, the term 'the good' itself brings with it a sense of moral value derived from the associated combination of the elements of solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust.

'Making things better for the community' is identified by *Interviewee 2* in describing his/her observation of what made community members so enthusiastic in attending community consultation meetings: *"They (community members attending meetings) wanted to make things better for their community – it was contagious, success led to more energy. All of them without fail wanted to do something positive for their community, in their language they wanted to 'make things better' for their community. The process of getting some results increased their enthusiasm."*

However, *interviewee 5* provides a caution in describing that he/she needs at times to remind and reinforce with community members to think about the larger good of their community: *"At times it is about reminding people about the common good – not just their own but the broader group of people. At times I feel I use my role not as a pure independent facilitator, but to remind people about that idea of common good."*

This notion of reminding people about the common good, is a reference to what existed in 'traditional society', which Giddens (1991:71) saw as providing stability and predictability. He suggested that in traditional society there was structure (traditions, institutions, moral codes and other expectations, that is established ways of doing things) which was generally quite stable. However, these codes, expectations and rules could be changed, especially through the unintended consequences of action, when people started to ignore them, replace them or reproduce them. For Giddens this happens when society changes from the traditional society, with its clearly defined rules. Giddens argues that in traditional societies individual actions and identities did not have to be thought about, as choices were determined by tradition and custom. These rules together with the resources at their disposal were used in social interactions. Hence, actors could employ social rules appropriate to their culture; ones they had learned through socialisation and experience towards the continuation of their society.

However, in the case of post- traditional times there is less concern about following tradition and as a result there is a need to think more about how to behave in society. So in modern societies (that is societies where modernity is well-developed) self-identity becomes an issue for all to become aware. So although in earlier societies, social order was based firmly in tradition and individuals were provided with more clearly defined roles; in post- traditional society there is a need for individuals to work out their own role. It is in modern society that the practitioner, as the knowledgeable actor, reflexively applies rules and resources because there is a less defined environment. If it is not possible to go back to traditional society, the question to be asked is: “what is it that is to be replicated in modern society? What is good for us? What to do? How to act? Who to be?” These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity, and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer. This is where the practitioner feels the need to remind people of the common good. However, what guides this notion of the good, its associated values and our role in a modern society?

For Taylor (1989:42) a sense of worth of life or the question, “what life is worth living?’ is a question of orientation in relation to the good. He believes that to know who we are, we must have frameworks and morality, “to know who you are is to be oriented in moral space”. This moral space allows us to know, or tells us, what is good versus what is bad. He states that there is a need to explore the frameworks that explain our thinking about our location in regards to the good. For Taylor, the human agent exists in a space of questions and the frameworks are, or form the answers.

This orientation in relation to the good is described by *Interviewee 5*: “*The vision and values of an area are always important and the aspiration needs to be about relationships and inclusion.*”

Quality of life and quality of life of an area are important as it is about the whole issue to do with how a group is and how individuals perceive the quality of life of the area to be. Quality of life is about wellness and individual health – spiritual, physical, emotional, social, material.

Other values are important such as how people feel, for example when we got them to compare two neighbouring suburbs when we were working with both. In the level of wealth, people felt it differed, even though they had the same income as the other suburb. Then how safe people felt, how well they felt, this differed even though they were in exactly the same cohort as the neighbouring suburb. These feelings relate to quality of life and happiness, in an area.”

This practitioner has identified quality of life (for wellness and individual

health in terms of the spiritual, physical, emotional, social and material), together with feelings of happiness as value indicators of the good, in the context where they were working.

Values and Ethics in Community Development Practice

In further exploring what is meant by the good, Frankena (1973:62) says it can be understood through theories of value and how people positively and negatively value concepts and things, the reasons they use in making these evaluations and the scope of applications of legitimate evaluations across the social world. He says that when put into practice, these views are meant to explain our views of the 'good'. So it is a case of looking at a sense of moral goodness and badness.

Frankena (1973:62) discusses this normative ethics, and says that what is being attempted is primarily to arrive at a set of acceptable judgements 1) of moral obligation 2) of moral value, and secondarily 3) of non-moral value. By moral obligation Frankena means an obligation arising out of considerations of what is right and what is wrong, it refers to what one believes to be correct according to one's own values.

For Frankena (1973:62) the sort of things that have a moral value are 'persons, groups of persons and elements of personality', whilst all sorts of things might be non-morally good or bad; for example physical objects like cars and paintings; experiences like pleasure and pain; and forms of government like democracy. Frankena says that ethics tends to be more interested in moral goods than natural goods and emphasises that when actions or persons are judged to be morally good or bad this is done because of the motives, intentions, dispositions or traits of character they manifest. When non-moral judgements are made it is on very different grounds or reasons, which he says varies from case to case depending for example upon whether our judgement is one of intrinsic, instrumental or aesthetic value. So when practitioners identify that they seek to do good, according to Frankena, this indicates traits of their own characters.

As my questions in this research have been about people and their actions, my concentration has been upon the moral values of these people and their actions. It is upon whether these practitioners

are morally good or bad and whether their actions result in what is morally good or bad for those with whom they work. In fact throughout its history, according to Frankena (1973:62), morality has been concerned about the cultivation of certain dispositions, or traits, amongst which are such character traits and virtues as honesty, kindness and conscientiousness. Indeed he says

that virtues themselves, are traits or dispositions which are not wholly innate; they must be acquired, at least in part, by teaching and practice. They are also traits of character rather than traits of personality (like shyness or charm) and they involve a tendency to do certain kinds of actions in certain kinds of situations, not just to think or feel in certain ways. They are not just abilities and skills, which one might possess but not put into practice or use. They are tendencies to do 'good' in various ways depending upon the context. So in Frankena's terms the practitioners who were interviewed have acquired these character traits to do good and the way they do that will depend on the context in which they are working. This is again the structuration argument of practitioners being influenced by the context.

The central question of normative ethics is in determining how basic standards of moral values are arrived at and justified, through asking what are the basic principles, criteria, or standards by which we can determine what we morally ought to do, what is morally right and wrong and what are moral rights? The answers to this question usually fall into two broad categories (according to Frankena 1973:14) being the deontological and the teleological. The principal difference between them is that deontological theories do not appeal to value considerations in establishing ethical standards while teleological theories do. Deontological theories use the concept of inherent rightness in establishing such standards while teleological theories consider the goodness or value brought into being by actions as the principal criterion of their ethical value. In other words, the deontological approach calls upon doing certain things on principle or because they are inherently right, whereas a teleological approach advocates that certain kinds of action are right because of the goodness of their consequences. Deontological theories thus stress the concepts obligation, duty, ought and of right and wrong, while teleological theories lay stress on the good, the valuable and the desirable. Deontological theories set forth formal or relational criteria such as equality or impartiality; teleological theories by contrast provide substantive or material criteria, for example happiness or pleasure. In looking at the earlier example from the research interviews (interview 4) the term 'justice' can be seen as a right in terms of society, being deontological, but in terms of equilibrium in the presenting situation can be seen as teleological.

So whilst teleologically associated theories, such as utilitarianism and consequentialism are concerned with the morality of an action being contingent on the action's outcome or result; deontology argues that decisions should be made considering the factors of one's duties or rights. Although later in this chapter I have been concerned with why others do not do their duty at times with working towards the most needy, i.e. they appeared not to meet the deontological duty, I observe that they did later speak as though they were using the duty of a good citizen and fitting into the deontological

parameters – but then the results of their actions (the teleological) did not meet the statements from their duties/obligations. So is either of these two (teleology and deontology) useful for me in deciphering what is the good sought in community development? In terms of community development practice, the deontological might guide the values and principles, whilst the teleological derives from the individual practitioner in a ‘sense of self’. Teleology appears to meet the values of the practitioners when they talk of happiness and quality of life. Certainly teleology seems more relevant with the outcomes being judged, as community development outcomes are dependent upon the context to determine the meaning. However, there are many drawbacks to teleological approaches as a guide to action. To start with, it is not always clear what the outcome of an action will be, nor is it always possible to determine who will be affected by it. Judging an action by the outcome is therefore hard to do beforehand. Another criticism is that the theory fails to acknowledge any human rights that could be violated for the sake of the greatest good. Indeed, even the murder of an innocent person would seem to be condoned if it served the greater number.

Is there an alternative normative framework to the teleological and deontological normative frameworks? Is there a better fit for my argument? There is a third normative framework, virtue ethics, as advocated by Aristotle (2005.11:1) and earlier identified by Frankena, which focuses on the inherent character of a person rather than on the specific actions he or she performs. Whilst their specific actions may be different, depending upon the circumstances, despite them varying in their actions, it does not necessarily alter their inherent character. So whilst their inherent character may not alter, their actions may – due to different information and analysis about the situation. This again is revisiting Giddens (1984) ‘structuration theory’, where it is acknowledged that the situation can affect an individual’s actions.

Both Plato and Aristotle (Ross 2005.11:1) do refer to ‘virtues’ and conceive of morality in this way, for they talk in terms of virtues and the virtuous, rather than in terms of what is right or obligatory. Those who hold this view are advocating an ethics of virtue, in opposition to an ethics of duty, principle, or doing (i.e. deontological ethics). Indeed Frankena (1973:13) believes that very often when there is puzzlement about what ‘should’ be done in a certain situation; what is needed, rather than an ethical instruction, is more simply either more factual knowledge or greater conceptual clarity. He gives an example that the debate on drugs, war and pollution is mainly due to ignorance of what bears on these problems. He elaborates that: ‘On these issues most of us would probably be clear about what should be done if only we knew all the relevant facts. That is we would strive for what is best, given enough information about the context. Our

actions may change depending upon the circumstances as understood by the amount of information available to us.’ This process allows the flexible but intact use of inherent characteristics and traits of the actor to arrive at an analysis of actions appropriate to the fully informed context.

This requirement for increased awareness of the facts for particular situations leading in turn to differing conceptual clarity, suggests that judgements cannot be made without understanding fully the context of the problem. It is here that the process of casuistry (a case based method/approach to doing ethics) is useful as it is a similar orientation that requires different decisions to be made depending upon the situation. A difference is that casuistry tends to define ‘categories’ of situations requiring similar judgements – as compared with the Aristotelian position which looks more to the uniqueness of each situation (Jonsen, 2001:104). Yet casuistry is important from the Aristotelian (Jonsen and Toulmin 1988:66) standpoint because it does help differentiate from the more positivist views of Plato who treated ethics more like a science than an art. In doing so Plato required the existence of universal principles by which all situations could be judged, whereas for Aristotle each situation had a unique particularity that required focused attention and the creative application of the human faculties. The power of casuistry on the other hand, is that it allows the users to find common ground from which to begin deliberation, whilst Aristotelians are compelled at every step to think for themselves what the circumstances demand. For Aristotelians it is a continual search for the unique character of the situation.

In a sense my research, in looking for commonalities in a practice of sustainability and community development, is looking for more of a casuistry type approach – rather than perhaps an Aristotelian – but certainly not a Platoan, because I seek context dependent patterns of principles. I seek to discover whether there are patterns of work which also allow for contextual sensitivity. So perhaps the practice I am looking for can be seen as virtue ethics based with a method of casuistry? The characteristics of the casuistry method can be used to show how both positivism and contextualising go about their processes and get different perspectives. The difference is that the more deontological positivist approach is not flexible to the nature of different situations, if the rules do not fit. Whilst the more casuistry virtue based approach, is flexible to the extent of being able to look at unique situations. The argument might be that for the practitioner being driven by deontological principles alone would not prove flexible enough to engage with the ‘other’; whose presenting data might otherwise appear as for example ‘non-moral’.

So in assisting to develop an understanding of the good, in a contextually

oriented practice, casuistry is useful in highlighting for the worker whether their practice is less flexible than it could be. Aristotle is able to take this understanding even further with his three intellectual virtues (episteme, techne and phronesis), as a way of approaching knowledge. Flyvberg (2001:56) elaborates the relevance of this to contemporary social science and explains that whereas episteme concerns theoretical 'know why' and techne denotes 'know how', phronesis emphasises 'practical knowledge and practical ethics'. He summarises them (Flyvberg 2001:57):

Episteme. Scientific knowledge. Universal, invariable, context independent. Based on general analytical rationality. The original concept is known today from the terms 'epistemology' and 'epistemic' (this being the positivist more deontological approach).

Techne. Craft/art. Pragmatic, variable, context dependent. Oriented towards production. Based on practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal. The original concept appears today in terms such as 'technique' and 'technology'. *Phronesis.* Ethics. Deliberation about values with reference to praxis. Pragmatic, variable, context dependent. Oriented towards action. Based on practical value rationality (thus capturing the Aristotelian characteristics).

Aristotle argues in favour of a well-functioning political science based on phronesis as imperative for a well-functioning society, stating "it is impossible to secure one's own good independently of political science" (Walton J in Flyvberg 2001: 180). Indeed he explains (Flyvberg 2001:128) that phronesis is the intellectual virtue most relevant to the project of freedom. Hence Aristotle was moved by a sense of proper order among the ends to be pursued, whilst Plato was moved more by a sense of cosmic order. So in terms of the intellectual virtues, episteme was universal and about 'knowing why' whilst techne was about 'knowing how' with an emphasis upon producing things. Phronesis is differentiated from the other two by a *value judgement* – being practical knowledge and practical ethics; rather than being a kind of science. Phronesis is a sense of what is ethically practical and not equated to knowledge of a general truth. It is often about 'prudence' or 'practical commonsense'. So phronesis is teleological in approach, similar to casuistry in method, looking for what is ethically practical. Phronesis also allows for a 'structuration' orientation, in that it is about what is practical in the situation and finally it also provides for the action orientation of community development through its practicality.

Phronesis thus concerns the analysis of values; "things that are good or bad for man" (Flyvberg 2001:57) as a point of departure for action. It is an intellectual activity most relevant to praxis and focuses on what is variable, on

that which cannot be encapsulated by universal rules or specific cases. Phronesis requires an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgement and choice (Giddens 1984:328 in Flyvberg 2001:57). More than anything else, phronesis requires experience to make the judgement about what is possible and practical. That judgement is a matter based upon values. This all sits well with notions of reflective practice as too the methodology and good practice sought by this research.

In searching for a normative framework for community development practice and these practitioners, Phronesis fits well as it allows a deliberation on values, is oriented on action and allows for Aristotelian characteristics. Phronesis also emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics. It is similar to casuistry and teleological and is the best fit in approach as one of the intellectual virtues.

The Common Good: Phronesis, Happiness and Spirit.

It is therefore identified that phronesis as an intellectual virtue is the best fit in describing the values and normative framework relevant for community development practitioners. This was derived from the interviews for this research, where all the consultants said that they want to do ‘good’ in their community development practice. They equated this ‘doing good’ with the ‘quality of life’ and notions of happiness for the people with whom they work. Another common theme deriving directly from the research, in exploring what is meant by doing good, has been an emphasis on notions of spirituality, which in the interviews have been described in the context as an ‘unwrapping of spirit’. Indeed one interviewee identified that in his actions and in pursuing his goals of unwrapping the spirit of others, in order to be successful, it meant that he too had his own spirit unwrapped, meaning that he too began to flourish. Descriptions of ‘unwrapping spirit’, ‘flourishing’ and ‘happiness’ fit well with some of Aristotle’s concepts. He identified in his virtue concepts the outcome of achieving eudaimonia – which when translated is ‘human flourishing’ or ‘happiness’. This pursuit of happiness is also a guide to the value judgement made by community development practitioners in seeking to achieve the ‘common good’. It is of course again a concept developed by Aristotle and serves to reinforce the earlier judgements that phronesis and virtue ethics fit in the most natural framework for community development practice and the practitioners interviewed.

Interviewee 2 describes how important it was for s/he to be involved in the New South Wales ‘Strengthening Local Communities Strategy’ in 2004¹³,

¹³ Strengthening Local Communities Strategy, (SLCS), Human Services Dept, New South Wales 2004-6.

which provided him/her with a vehicle to address people's concerns that had been learnt earlier through talking generally to them about their lives: *"Prior to getting involved in that program I worked and met with lots of people all around the country who voiced a lot of frustration about dissatisfaction with where their life was at or where their community was at. This process actually gave people a vehicle to become more satisfied initially with their ability to be involved and to be listened to and taken seriously."*

This suggests an increased level of satisfaction and potential happiness, as a result of being successfully involved in a community development process.

According to Aristotle, who was the most prominent exponent of eudaimonia in the Western philosophical tradition (Aristotle, 2005:1:10), eudaimonia (or happiness) is the proper goal of human life. For Aristotle, the common good actually comes about through seeking this happiness and a state of human flourishing. Achieving eudaimonia is a state variously translated as being successful. However, in all this, Aristotle did not see eudaimonia as a subjective state, but an objective state, in that it characterises the well lived life, irrespective of the emotional state of the person experiencing it. Consequently happiness is not seen as a hedonistic pastime which in itself would be subjective.

Interviewee 6 also talks about their own research into personal happiness and the experience of living in a good community (Eckersley 2005). S/he like Eckersley and Aristotle with his objective state, draws a comparison between seeking happiness from buying things, which results in a subjective experience, whilst on the contrary research has shown there is a better chance of becoming happy if one has a sense of personal spirit or a belief in a religion: *"In today's world when people are unhappy and they try to become happy by buying things, there are studies that show happiness does not improve proportionately with buying more of those things. People do not understand about the need to re-engage with their community and other people, which is all about wellness and personal spirit. Some research has been done where they looked at the link between people who had some sort of spiritual foundation to their life, some sort of belief system, and their level of wellness and happiness. There was quite conclusive evidence that those people who had spirituality in their lives had a better experience in life. Yet we are in the age of materialism and people believe that more is going to make them happier. Yet it is not, which is why there is this return amongst some people to the idea of community and family being important. However, they have had their heads in the materialistic space for so long that they kind of don't understand what you need to do to get back into being a community."*

Research shows that when incomes become a lot larger the happiness level actually starts to dip off. It is really interesting. That is why we have a role in community development”

This description suggests that in a materialistic world, people seek to improve their subjective feeling of happiness through buying more material objects, which in turn, according to Layard (2006:49) fails to increase their happiness. Similarly for Eckersley (2005:78) who says that in psychology, happiness is part of what is called subjective wellbeing. Yet he identifies a holistic notion of being happy, noting that marriage, religion, friends, work, leisure, health and money all enhance wellbeing. For both Eckersley and Layard happiness is an objective state.

In describing his central ethical concept of happiness, Aristotle says that it is a unified, all embracing notion, or as translated a ‘flourishing’ or ‘doing well’ or eudaimonia. The point of eudaimonia is to view one’s life as a whole and not separate the personal and the public or professional, or duty or pleasure. Using the concept of virtues as providing the conceptual linkage between the individual and his/her society, Aristotle analysed virtue as a basic constituent of happiness (Solomon, 1992:105). His view of eudaimonia could be seen as the realisation of one’s true potential. In supporting this view Eckersley (2005:96) argues that the eudaimonic view embraces an implicit sense of virtue, a requirement to distinguish between those needs (desires) whose satisfaction produces momentary pleasure and those needs that are more objective and rooted in human nature and whose realisation leads to human growth and wellbeing.

Although first popularised by Aristotle, eudaimonia now too belongs to the tradition of virtue ethics generally. For the virtue ethicist, eudaimonia describes the state achieved by the person who lives the proper human life, an outcome that can be achieved by practicing the virtues. However, to identify the virtues for human beings, one must have an account of what the human purpose is, over which there is always sharp disagreement. Thus as Alasdair MacIntyre (1984 181-187) observed thinkers as diverse as Homer, Aristotle, the authors of the New Testament, Thomas Aquinas and Benjamin Franklin have all proposed lists of virtues; these lists often fail to overlap.

However, Aristotle himself categorised the virtues as moral and intellectual. He identified a number of intellectual virtues, the most important of which were Sophia (theoretical wisdom) and the already identified phronesis (practical wisdom). For his moral virtues he included prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. It has already been seen how phronesis as practical wisdom fits well a teleological and structuration action orientation, whilst the moral virtues also allow for practical judgement,

strength and justice.

Upon reflection on this discourse, I conclude that my normative framework of community development is guided by sustainability^{14*} and doing good. The practitioners interviewed say their practice is about doing good and assessing their success as the happiness, in objective terms, achieved by the people with whom they work. In this context, doing good means trying to live one's values and communicating what one is doing with honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness in a form that is appropriate to context (Habermas 1987). Doing good is showing how one is living in the direction of one's values, being honest about the degree to which one is doing so, so that the quality of work can be assessed rationally. To know if one is achieving this, according to McNiff (in Clandinin 2007:321) who provides sound advice: 'This means that I have to articulate how I account for myself, which brings me to judge my own practice and how I understand the good in practice.'

In looking at the normative frameworks that make sense for me, I need to understand and identify what are some of the ethical/value frameworks that make sense for me and within which I can locate an acceptable framework for sustainability and community development. My 'self' and my 'direction' in life cannot be separated; as Mahatma Gandhi advocated "we must be the change that we wish to see in the world" (Potts 2002:34). So what I believe to be true of community work, is that it is an extension of the self, it is part of a sense of wholeness. For, who I am affects what I believe and how I do things.

Community Development Practice and Practice Context.

Structuration

So far, 'doing good' has been explored from the perspective of the individual. It has been highlighted that principles which inform community development practitioners are supplemented by their own personal values, in a sense of

¹⁴ What has community development got to do with sustainability? The term 'social' as it relates to sustainability is an interesting one as it has usually been discussed through notions of the 'triple bottom line' by which is meant the economic, ecological and social. The discussion and emphasis has been primarily driven by the first two and only inferred the inclusion of the social. However, there is now recognition that community processes are vital for achieving ecologically sustainable economic development. For example utilising the term 'social capital', Putnam (2000) marshals an impressive amount of material showing a growing body of research suggesting that where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighbourhoods and even nations prosper (Beem 1999:319-325). In all this 'sustainability' is not ultimately a technical notion, but a moral one, involving some conception of the 'common good', of right relationships between human and natural communities (Oades 2007).

self. In an endeavour to provide a tool for worker understanding, virtue ethics is seen as the most useful for understanding a practice that appreciates the context of the work whilst seeking to achieve the good life. Giddens (1993:166 and 1984:25), identified 'Duality of Structure' by which he saw social practice having both a structural and an agency (individual) component. This means that the structural environment constrains the individual's behaviour but also makes it possible. At a basic level this means that people make society, but are at the same time constrained by it; and that the worker's practice and their sense of self are at times compromised by the organisation within which they work, and not solely by the immediate context of the work. The result can create considerable frustration and confusion for the worker, unless they have an adequate framework through which to understand the larger context, including the impact of the employing organisation upon their practice.

There follows an exploration of some of these influences. My experiences and story are used to highlight some of the dilemmas encountered. However, no excuse is made for concentrating upon the context of public administration because, as already explained, the majority of community workers are employed either directly by the public sector, or indirectly through funded non-government agencies.

The Community Practitioner in Public Administration

Having had a grounding in fieldwork mainly with Aboriginal people for 12 years (1978 -1990) in the Kimberley, I moved to programme and policy work in the same state government department's Head Office in Perth in 1990. It had been my experience that this department by which I was employed, was not generally, in my opinion very strongly oriented towards the most obvious needy group in the community ie Aboriginal people; and as a manager it was continuously difficult to obtain adequate resources and make programmes fit to achieve effective outcomes with Aboriginal people. Yet for me this was an issue of social justice and equity. Whilst the departmental strategic plans and policies all stated that a priority for community development, poverty and child protection were areas where Aboriginal people were grossly over represented (Carter Report 1984): the policy and programme staff went about their work without an evident emphasis on specific groups. However, later, when it became more fashionable to have Aboriginal oriented programmes (Western Australian Carmen Labor Government, 1990) these same departmental policy people who had not advocated about poverty and for Aboriginal people were suddenly 'interested' and working to introduce Aboriginal programmes. They also became friendly with the same Aboriginal staff, who had previously been ignored. Why was this? I

wondered. What was happening in these apparent contradictions?

Then in 1992 there was another policy shift, which came with the so called 'nice' face of welfare and a government policy called Social Advantage (Western Australian government report 1992). This time the middle class became the clients, instead of the lower classes who were clearly in poverty. The same policy people changed tack again; developing Parenting Centres throughout the state; which produced an abundance of literature on parenting for clients to read. I wondered what had happened to the still obvious need for Aboriginal people to be meaningfully assisted. Why weren't Aboriginal programmes still relevant, as Aboriginal people's circumstances had not changed? Surely this, the "welfare" department should be about poverty and need, as a common goal for the human services?

On reflection I realised that I was experiencing a confusion between my own values, my sense of self and the values and policies that drove the public administration organisation for which I was working. Having worked in the human service sector of the public service for 30 years I had 'presumed' that there should be the same values attached to the industry as I had myself, that is values about the public service being for the betterment of people for some commonly agreed good. I assumed that my fellow workers, who were mainly social workers, were trying to do something for the common good, to help people in poverty, and to make a difference in their lives, to be altruistic. Indeed a lot of them were interested in helping people in need, particularly those staff doing the frontline work, that is the caseworkers and community workers. Yet when I looked at the head office workers, the senior managers etc., I found that what they said in terms of the words they used, did not always, in my opinion, match the actions they took. I came to the conclusion that a lot of these people were there for their own career advancement, rather than for what I presumed to be satisfaction in working in an area with certain values and altruism attached. They appeared to take advantage of opportunities, in the same way that I had noticed politicians also doing, that is to apparently get something out of it for themselves.

My frustration grew from the contradictions of my own values with those of the larger organisation. I felt that the human services industry should be more altruistic and be about the common good and social gains for society. Yet there arose apparent further contradictions with the Labor party politicians of the day also appearing to not be driven by long-term social gains, but by their own short-term political survival. I observed that politicians were more drawn by the need to be popular than driven by a set of values. No longer was the Labor party, a party 'of' the people and one for the disadvantaged as it had been in the past, but rather was one driven by the latest popularity polls! With my Marxist influenced sociology education, I

had understood of the Labor party to be the socialists, who should be involved in helping people suffering from disadvantage. Who had responsibility now to look after society's disadvantaged? Here was a situation where I noticed both major political parties had dropped the category of 'welfare' policies from their election campaigns. Where previously they had emphasised Law & Order; Health; Education; and Welfare: it was now Law & Order; Health; and Education. 'Welfare' had dropped off the agenda and along with that the notions of altruism and social democracy and helping the disadvantaged. In what context were these trends occurring, at the apparent expense of 'good' values? To me the political direction had apparently changed.

In researching the literature I have found Giddens (1984:256) who identifies this phenomenon, arguing that the 'rules' of social order may only be in our heads and people are often shocked when seemingly minor expectations are not adhered to. He puts this down to a process whereby people's everyday actions reinforce and reproduce a set of expectations, and it was this set of my own reinforced expectations with which I identified as making up the social order.

The difficulty was that I had my own 'normative framework'¹⁵ of the social and felt that many of these other people in the industry were not striving for what I believed was the common aim of this branch of the human services industry i.e. to assist the disadvantaged. It was apparent that only if it became acceptable in terms of policy to advocate about reducing poverty, would some bureaucrats do it. When Aboriginal services were the flavour of the month, they then used all the right words, regardless as to whether they thought it to be the 'right' thing to do. They used words that appeared to mean to me to be the right way to go. They had all the words. I wanted to believe them, but became confused and disillusioned by the emerging contradictions. What was happening? What were these apparent constraints upon community development practice? It appeared that fellow workers, managers and politicians were using words in a way that meant different things to different people, the metaphors had differing meanings.

Values and Metaphors

George Lakoff (2004) explored this process whereby words and metaphors mean different things to different people. He argues that it is important to know the values of the people who are using these metaphors, because the same metaphors mean different things depending upon who is listening. So

¹⁵ A normative framework in this sense is my own set of values and ethics describing how I think things 'ought' or 'should' be

once again the values of individuals are important in order to understand what they actually do.

As in my example, he explores the use of words in the political context and particularly talks about the use of metaphors by politicians (Lakoff 2004:part 2). Lakoff distinguishes between what he sees as the two major political parties in the United State of America, calling them the ‘conservatives’ and the ‘progressives’. He says that because the metaphors they use ‘sound’ like something to the listener, it does not mean that they mean the same to all who are listening. For example he suggests that in using the term “family”, conservatives think of a strict father figure, yet to progressives the same term “family” is about a nurturing environment, where both the mother and father nurture the children; whilst the strict father in the conservative’s mind instructs and tells the child what is right and what is wrong.

My example provides a parallel situation, as there had been discussions between different political parties about Aboriginal people. Despite the parties having differing value bases and hence differing intended outcomes, much of the rhetoric sounded the same, as political parties sought to win over voters from the other side, with similar languages. Lakoff (2004:33) highlights what can happen in this process. In his book, he argues that conservatives are often in the powerful position of “running” the agenda of language and that by ‘reacting or engaging in conversation with them over an issue, the progressives give the position espoused in the words some credibility.’ In this Lakoff is suggesting that the conservatives have greater ownership of the language used.

Martin Luther King (1963) made a similar observation when he instructed his followers to ‘never react as only the privileged react first’. He believed that his followers should respond non-violently to violence, through which they could change themselves and reinforce their own values, but if they responded to violence with violence, they would reinforce the values of the others – as they would then give the violent person a ‘position’ whilst responding with non-violence would strengthen their own position.

In the case of Lakoff’s two political parties, he saw them as having two very different sets of values and in order to understand what they meant by a particular metaphor, it was essential to first understand what their values meant to them in order to understand what was meant by that metaphor. Indeed he believed that conservatives had so much in common with their values that they had driven the development of their own language and hence the meaning of their own metaphors. In contrast he believed that the progressives made things very difficult for their own ideals because there were a number of varieties of progressives all with differing opinions, all thinking

their views to be the best. Whilst there were very few differing views among conservatives who all had very similar values.

This type of analysis helps to explain some of my confusion as, with my values, I had one interpretation of terms, so to me in my work there seemed to be a lack of consistency in abiding by the metaphor the 'common good'. Yet differing values were producing differing emphasis. I, perhaps naively, had thought that all were working towards a common purpose, the common good. However, I observed that people around me continually moved and were apparently not consistent with what I presumed to be their values, they altered their priorities more and more with changes in political direction. As politicians appeared to change their minds, so did the bureaucrats. To me these bureaucrats appeared to be beasts of survival, motivated towards their own ends, their own careers and their own apparent 'happiness', rather than following clear democratic values about the good. Yet they were very busy, impressing their seniors with how efficient they were. They introduced the terms 'outcomes' and 'indicators' for measuring the effectiveness of the programmes. So what was happening? After all they had used the language which I had interpreted as being consistent with values and virtues which I saw as appropriate to the day's issues. They appeared to identify solutions towards a 'better' society, but then there was also an apparent lack of consistency, to my mind.

Who were these bureaucrats and what did they value? What were they doing? Was this just self-interest at work with no notion of the common good? What were the drivers behind the actions of these public administrators? Something was driving the values of public administration, which in this case is a key factor of Giddens theory of structuration; the effect of the structure (the organisation larger than the individual).

In terms of Giddens (1984:25), this analysis is one of the human agency (individual) and the social structure (organisation) being in relationship to one another. So to understand what is happening in this situation, it is necessary to look at the social structure (moral codes, institutions and established ways of doing things) to comprehend the forces at play in public administration.

Notions of Good in Public Administration

Denhardt (in Goss 1996:274) provides some insight on this situation noting that over the preceding twenty years in the field of public administration, there had been an outpouring of written works on the subject of ethics, particularly on the ethics of persons who govern and those in the public service. Goss noted how the role of the administrators had changed during the twentieth century; administrators had become policy makers; the public had

demanded both responsiveness and more responsibility; and the bureaucracy had become more professional. A review of public administration literature over the last half of the twentieth century also suggests two dominant traditions or paradigms for public administration ethics: a bureaucratic ethos and a democratic ethos (Denhardt in Goss 1996:578). Denhardt (1996) surveyed government career civil servants in the United States. He found that most identified with the bureaucratic ethos; that is core values including neutrality, professional competence, efficiency and effectiveness, due process and bureaucratic ethics; rather than a democratic ethos which advanced social values, political principles, public interest, seeking fairness, justice support for individual rights and serving as advocates.

As Denhardt identified, there have been many studies of public administrators and administration, some of these were by Cooper who was a particularly prolific writer on the subject. He (Cooper 1991:11) pointed out in his American study within public administration that 'the right to participate in pursuit of self-interest has tended to become (divorced) severed from the obligation to participate in search of larger interests. The result has been the tendency to fragment our political economy and render consideration of the broader public good virtually impossible'.

Both Cooper and Denhardt therefore found similar results, which raises the question as to whether it is still possible to think in terms of a normative framework of doing good within public administration and by extension or association, the delivery of democratic ideals. In all this my perspective may well have been a more traditional one, with virtuous administrators following democratic ideals.

Cooper (1991:11) goes further and describes what he calls the loss of values in public administration; moving from the previously understood normative perspective of the virtuous administrator. He points out that this may have been done to make representative democracy more effective, but he believes that in so doing the option to emphasise administrative values was taken, which resulted in barriers to a more participatory democracy in, what he identifies as, a burgeoning administrative state. So, for Cooper, whilst the bureaucrats behind these moves may have previously shared certain democratic values, their commitment moved to a more technical rationality, or scientific approach, which ultimately dominated their actions and moved (American) political discourse from concern with justice, with its civic republican echoes, towards a focus on progress, a progress defined primarily as material abundance. Whilst Cooper is US centric in his analysis, he does provide a rationale for the movement away from democratic

ethos values towards an emphasis upon material wealth as the main aim of western democratic society; together with the argument that to achieve this, rationalists then tried to make public administration more cost-effective and efficient through becoming more technical in approach. Powell and Geoghean (2004:267) describe similar findings where there was a feeling of less participatory democracy experienced by community development practitioners in their work in Ireland, following changes in funding guidelines towards an increased technical accountability from their public administration employers.

In making the above observations Cooper (1987) had moved from his earlier perspective on public administration, where he had differentiated between what he called 'internal' and 'external' goods. By internal goods he had seen practices that could not be stolen, purchased or acquired through persuasion. He saw these as only gained through public administrators engaging in a practice and submitting to its standards of excellence; "it is the nature of internal goods that although they are produced out of competition to excel, their achievement is a good for the whole community" (p322). On the other hand Cooper saw external goods as not contributing directly to practice; being in terms of money, prestige, status, position and power. He saw them as not always becoming the property of the individual as there were winners and losers, unlike with internal goods where the value was shared by the community of practice (public administrators) as well as the larger community.

So in 1987, Cooper in his analysis of public administration, had differentiated and highlighted what he saw as the selfish nature of external goods but did not suggest at that time, that they had replaced what he called internal goods (i.e. those that produced a good for the whole community) through a technical emphasis on self-promotion and reward. In reflection at the same time as these writings, I had been experiencing the conflict of implementing these internal and external goods and the actions of those around me. Bureaucrats were not appearing to act for the common good, but for technical and more materialist ends.

In another work, MacIntyre (1984:181–225) discussed these trends together, referring to both internal and external goods. He developed an understanding of the elements of the common good in terms of virtue which he saw as comprising "character traits that made it possible for one to engage effectively in a practice by seeking to excel through achieving in relation to the organisation's internal goods while keeping the external goods of the organisational setting in a position of lesser importance." He said that public administrators needed to determine the human attributes most likely to

advance internal goods, which were defined as essential to the practice and protect them from organisational pressures e.g. attributes associated with the effective administration and management world, such as competitiveness and profit orientation, which he believed may be unsuited to the interests of a democratic political society. He believed that the virtues of the public administrator must be consistent with the agreed upon internal goods of the practice of public administration. So McIntyre advocated for the democratic ethos.

In comparison to McIntyre's recommendations, by 1991 Cooper had moved from a position where earlier, in 1987, he had differentiated between internal and external goods, to one where he felt that external goods had taken over. This he saw as attributable to rationalists and empiricists believing that market forces could determine priorities in favour of material abundance and consumerism and the 'good' becoming about what the community could buy. However, Wolfe (1989:260-262), was more optimistic and suggested that democratic processes were still strong; believing at the time there to be a revival of interest in the concept of civil society. He suggested this deriving as a reaction to claims that both the market and the state had weakened the social and moral ties which together sustained a just and free society.

Community Practice in Public Administration

As has been seen, there are many similar analyses of the changes in public administration. However, rather than getting bogged down in the many writings, the point of this analysis is to identify the resultant impact on community practitioners who work either as employees in public administration, or in funded agencies. What does this analysis mean for these community development practitioners? After all in the above discourse, the community practitioner would be able to most easily identify with the democratic ethos, with its values similar to those community practitioners, as earlier identified. Hence the practitioner might well see the democratic ethos as a better opportunity to pursue their own values. Whilst with the bureaucratic ethos the opportunities might be perceived as limited and the practitioner is more likely to make compromises in order to remain in some change/action orientation. So the democratic ethos would seem to present more opportunities for the community practitioner. What is evident is that the practitioner always remains action focussed, using practice skilfully to negotiate the nature of that action, whether or not that is constrained by context and reduced by compromises.

Frank (in Butcher et al 2007:143) highlights the nature of community

development practice as a skilful one and not a rationality. He sees the practice as an ability to make discerning judgements, based on sensitivity, perceptiveness and practical reasoning and confirms it is aligned to community development values and those of the practitioner. In a similar vein, is Aristotle's concept of phronesis, whereby the practice is the opposite of acting on the basis of scripts and protocols in that it involves creativity, flexibility and attention to context (Frank 2004 in Butcher et al 2007:143). In all this, the action-orientation of the practice is looking for opportunities to carry out work that is in line with its values.

This continual search for opportunities to promote change, or make a difference in line with community practice values, highlights the contextual orientation of the practice and the need to understand both large and small factors affecting the situation. It is here that structuration's emphasis on social phenomena analysis through understanding the micro and macro forces, provides further evidence of how the practitioner might seek opportunities when looking at this changing face of public administration. For example, in terms of the macro, in recent decades a major identified factor would be globalisation, which can be analysed from a structural perspective. In his discussions on structuration, Giddens (1984:139) states that a serious explanation of such issues as globalisation, must lie somewhere within the network of micro and macro forces. This means that the practitioner must look at the wider context, for an analysis of social life and for the opportunities to satisfy their sense of self in practice.

The Wider Context of Public Administration.

To elaborate upon this larger consideration of public administration context, an investigation of micro and macro forces reveals that the earlier mentioned writings of Wolfe, McIntyre and Cooper were not occurring in some academic vacuum. For in Europe, for much of the 1980s and early 1990s the policy discourse among leaders in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries was all but stalled by the equal and opposite claims of social democrats and neo-liberals, each concerned to defend the primacy of either the state or the market; whilst 'the engines of globalisation and the digital revolution were driving a search for a new political architecture to address problems of economic polarisation and social exclusion.' (Considine 2000:2). In this, the social democrats had identified the loss of democratic ideals in a neo-liberal push for the free market and as a result an interplay of the differing forces was occurring in search of meaningful outcomes. In many ways this became a challenge to the bureaucratic ethos of public administration.

Considine (2000:2) goes further with this analysis describing that often without a conventional ideological framework to guide them, the most innovative democracies in Europe and the Asia-Pacific spent the 1990s searching for new instruments to address these conditions of social exclusion and economic polarisation.. Interestingly, their common interest became to build stronger communities in the hope that they might be better placed to negotiate the new economic order, with a stronger base of people-connectedness. In terms of an opportunity this can be seen as an overt aim of community development. So in this larger debate, stronger forms of local connectedness and better integrated governance systems to mobilise local resources came to be viewed as the means to address the priorities of economic competitiveness and social inclusion and to break from the previous paradigms and dichotomies which only offered market and state as an either/or decision trap. In turn, the arguments driving these decisions that influence public administration and thereby provide possible opportunities for community practitioners to work within that system. Hence the interplay of micro and macro forces provided both a push for more accountability and technical efficiency, whilst at the same time stirring arguments for more meaningful democracy.

Again the same influences and forces had effect at the even larger level and were highlighted in the globalisation debate emphasised through the United Nations, whose conference on the Environment and Development in 1992 declared that: “Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and all the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems upon which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs improved living standards for all, protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can, in a global partnership for sustainable development” (U.N Conference 1992. chap 1 Preamble).

These declarations were occurring at the same time when globalisation was being heralded as the way forward for all material economic growth. However, the declaration was at the same time a reaction to globalisation, as the declaration saw people seen and not markets, as seen to be central to a better future;

“Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature” (Principle 1)

The declaration went on to identify the ‘*goal of establishing a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people. (Agenda 21 UN 1992)*’

By 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Earth Summit 2002), held in Johannesburg, South Africa, the United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to what is now commonly known as Local Agenda 21. In June 2012 at the Rio+20 Conference the Heads of State and Government again reaffirmed this commitment.

The above discourse appears to be in contradiction to the trend in public administration where the democratic ethos was reducing in its impact, to be replaced, as identified by Goss (1996:274) by a technical bureaucratic ethos. Yet on the macro level, changes more in line with community development values were increasing their impact. This can again be explained by the theory of structuration in that social structure, in the form of the longer term effects of traditions, institutions, moral codes, established ways of doing things shapes our lives. In this they are essentially conservative forces. Yet structuration is also the process in which human agency and social structure are in a constant relationship; the social structure is reproduced by the repetition of acts by individual people (and can therefore change). When the individuals act differently the social structure can change. Taking into account the macro forces identified in the United Nations Local Agenda 21, the more conservative values of public administration were likely to change.

As has already been described, community development practice is about change for the common good, in line with democratic ethos. So do the practitioners who are employed by public administration see current opportunities to change the values of the present structure? It is evident that the values and ethics in public administration have not changed quickly enough for those interviewed and *Interviewee 6* shows some frustration over this: “*there is a need for governments to regulate on ethics to adequately resource sound community development approaches[.] there is a need for government to regulate by establishing standards and financial contributions required to adequately resource sound community development approaches.*”

Toward the Good in Public Administration – Creating Opportunities

In the spirit of this research and my own community development practice framework, it is necessary to see the opportunity and chance to promote positive change. How can this occur in what is essentially a conservative and technical public administration? What needs to be done to

change the orientation of the public administration?

Being part of the existing social structure, public administration represents much tradition which is slow to change and therefore frustrates employees like community development practitioners whose values are often about change, movement and their own notion of doing good.

The important place that public administration has in people's lives and the huge effect of its prevailing values upon society, bring into question what processes occur to ensure that prevailing societal ethics and values are present in public administration. From the perspective of community development practitioners, the scope of what they can achieve is constrained by those values, yet even in this age of mass media the earlier noted declarations of the United Nations take a long time to translate into the acts of public administrators.

Frankena (1973:63) highlights in discussing ethics of virtue, that there is a need to ensure that the traits and dispositions of doing good are learnt through some process; be that education or some other socialisation process. It may therefore be seen to be part of moral philosophy or ethics, which (according to Encyclopaedia Britannica

'Online' 22 May 2011) "is concerned with criteria of what is morally right and wrong, and concludes with the formulation of rules that have direct implications for what human actions, institutions and ways of life should be like." Yet how can administrators be able to discern these changing demands of society?

Pinkus and Dostert (2002:52) wrote on this topic and whilst agreeing that public administration had moved to typically focus solely on questions of efficiency and preference satisfaction, at the same time they also argued that politics were shaping democratic processes and the character of citizens (which in turn would affect this efficiency focus). They (2002:52-53) said that because of these trends and concerns about the state of civil society and public administration, they believed that politicians essentially acknowledged that civil society was important. Consequently they argued that policy makers should be educated appropriately in ethics and that this education and ethics instruction to create the good society should look at ways in which to further the project of self- governance by transforming preferences through public deliberation and by giving citizens opportunities to discover new ideals and to mobilize themselves. They believed that an education curriculum which took seriously the role of public policy in shaping democratic processes would also emphasize the historical dimensions of controversies over the public good as well as the role of experts in expanding or closing down democratic deliberation. So their argument was for a more

contextualised and collaborative approach to the education of public administrators and policy analysts, as it could then pay greater attention to citizenship and the furtherance of democratic practices.

If it is the case that there is agreement that the values of public deliberation towards a good society should be taught to public administrators, how is it that the administrators still remained technical and rational in their approach, with a focus on efficiency and material abundance? Pinkus and Dostert (2002:49) answered this question and highlighted what they saw as the inadequacies of ethics' education for public administrators. Whilst acknowledging that there had been two decades of increasing interest by departments of public administration and public policy in considering ways to introduce ethics to their curricula, they concluded that 'it is premature to believe that ethics and analysis of the good society have become ubiquitous in today's public policy and public administration programmes' (Pinkus and Dostert 2002:49). They believed this to be so because the most prevalent approach to teaching ethics traces its origin in applied ethics and the methodology of using abstract frameworks to solve normative quandaries. As a result the courses built around this approach commonly explore a number of different ethical paradigms, eg. utilitarian, deontological, or virtue based theories, and then confront a range of administrative or policy dilemmas. Students are encouraged to draw on various ethical frameworks that they have encountered to arrive at their own solutions to these dilemmas. However, this ethical awareness approach emphasizes episodic problem solving so heavily that it risks trivializing moral reflection; as a result it could be argued that ethical challenges may be seen as distractions from the usual business of public administration. In addition the approach could also encourage students to see abstract models of ethics as interchangeable (particularly as great philosophers disagree among themselves), each model may seem to be equally valid. Thus while gaining a great deal of moral sensitivity by adhering to the ethical awareness model, they may also more subtly be encouraged to become moral pluralists who are able to speak eloquently to every side of the issue but are committed to none. So rather than understanding their own commitment and moral standpoint, they can argue any viewpoint – but without the moral conviction of arguing from their own sense of values and therefore be seen to be pragmatic.

The solution put forward by Pinkus and Dostert (2002:52) is for policy makers who are ethically engaged, to become familiar with how the many ways in which and where they carry out policy making help to form the contours of democratic life. They must be familiar with how public policy affects citizenry and how values are formed and can mediate the effects of policy. Policymakers need to consider virtues relevant to social and political

life and through which means they may be developed. Otherwise the public administration and public policy programmes are asking students in their training, to do what few if any other faculties ever try, let alone accomplish. These programmes are asking them to combine knowledge and skills from economics, politics and ethics, without being taught how it might be done.

Whilst agreeing with much of what is argued by Pinkus and Dostert (2002), they do concentrate on looking closely at the skills and education of policy makers. This is still essentially technical in approach and I believe that administrators need to be encouraged to understand themselves and the influences upon them. The public administration process is not outside the individual. Their commitment can be increased if they believe and live their own values in their policymaking, rather than being some form of detached analysers. Of course, these same values should directly derive from those associated with the dreams of politicians and society, that is for a better society, one with all the positive features and benefits seen of living in a society with a democratic ethos.

Pinkus and Dostert (2002) do provide us with an understanding that values and ethics affect public administration. They also include notions of civic life and democracy as part of a normative framework. What they do not do is to discuss the different ethical frameworks. The same ethical frameworks analysed earlier in this chapter are relevant to that consideration. Whilst these administrators have larger societal responsibilities and hence may require a more deontological framework, their investment in the outcome for society needs to be enhanced with them developing a sense of self.

Interviewee 6 advocates for a societal strategy over values: “It is important that people know what motivates them. Schools should have courses on values, values acquisition, social responsibility, communications, interpersonal skills and the role of social sustainability. You have got to come face-to-face with your own values and how it impacts your communication, the way you perceive others, and how it impacts on how people perceive you, too. I don’t think anyone can truly ever understand their values unless they effectively understand this and have a respect for one another. Without an understanding of how values impact that process, you are never going to be able to do it effectively”.

Summary

The intention of this chapter was to explore the ethics and values of effective community development practice. To do this the values of the self, those involved in the community development profession and those of a major

employer were researched within Giddens structuration framework.

This chapter therefore explored the immediate world of the community development practitioners and their values in how their sense of self is developed and structured into their own narratives and stories. Next some of the dynamics which occur were looked at where workers seek to follow their own values but clash with organisational values; this included some of the dilemmas that occur for the worker and resultant dilemmas.

What is meant by a normative community development framework (of doing good towards achieving a civil society in the western democratic mould) was also explored from both philosophical and practical viewpoints, to see whether it is best achieved through a sense of duty from a role obligation viewpoint or a sense of commitment and investment from a moral standpoint. From the research data it was evident that to the democratic values of a normative community practice should be added the development of quality of life, happiness and spirit as aspects of the common good.

In searching for this normative framework for community development practice and the practitioners, as an ethical framework *phronesis* was found to fit well, as it allows for a deliberation on values, is oriented on action and allows for other Aristotelian characteristics. *Phronesis* also emphasises practical knowledge, know-how and practical ethics. It is similar to casuistry and teleological in approach.

In pursuing an analysis with Giddens' structuration framework, this chapter identified how public administration and other factors influence the nature of services delivered and policies and programmes actually developed. Subsequently larger societal and political values were discussed for their impact on public administration. Finally, having identified some trends in the international context of public administration, a way of developing values in public administration towards the 'good' is suggested.

Through the course of this chapter it became evident that community practice is an act of skilful artistry. The make-up of this artistry is further explored in the next chapter where a making sense process is followed to uncover community development frameworks.

CHAPTER 6: PRACTITIONERS AND MAKING SENSE OF COMMUNITY PRACTICE

Having examined in the previous chapter the values and ethics which guide practitioners' practice, in this chapter I address the second part of the second research question "What values, ethics and frameworks guide practitioners practice?" Firstly I look at who community practitioners are. Next what are they doing in their practice and how do they make sense of their practice? This is done through an exploration of the relevant literature to find what has been articulated, what can be used to elaborate and understand the questions that arise in what ways this area of practice can be understood. Next I look for common factors through which the work might be understood.

The second part of this chapter develops and explores two new community practice frameworks. The first is a potential overall framework to look at the holistic strength and balance of practice and the second a framework that could be used to understand improvement in practice.

Community Development Practitioners

Whilst there is very little existing or emerging research that either helps to understand the social construction of community development, and thereby the context within which practitioners can be understood, or offers a political analysis of it, this research has developed some of this theme. Hence the earlier chapters with notions of what comprises the 'sense of self' and also a discussion in to an understanding of the values and ethic of practitioners both as themselves and as influenced by the context of their work (Giddens 1984).

Despite this dearth of information about practitioners, Powell & Geoghegan (2004) did complete some research in Ireland to address this deficiency in knowledge and, in acknowledgement that very little was known about: 'Who practices community development? What do they think? What issue are they working with? How do they view themselves, the state, social policy, local democracy, social partnership and other issues? (Powell & Geoghegan

2004:2). In that research Powell and Geoghegan surveyed self-identified practitioners together with the 559 strong membership of the Irish Community Workers' Cooperative. The self-identification was in terms of being involved and interested as community development activists, or people involved in community development issues. Rather than identifying particular jobs or people, they concentrated on what might be said about the people involved, mainly through their attitudes and opinions. However, of particular interest, 69% of respondents said that professional community workers would improve the quality of community development work and 95% were of the opinion that professionalization was in the best interests of socially excluded communities (Powell and Geoghegan 2004:138-9). Having posited three models of development i.e. state led; market led; and community led, they note that the state led model has been virtually eclipsed by the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. They suggest that it is possible to view the context for community development in two ways; either as Third Way politics and reinventing governance, or the emergence of a social left that is reinventing politics, by reclaiming civil society. This social economy they see existing within the third sector between market and state, reflecting the failure of the market economy to redistribute opportunities equally. In this the social economy is linked to the concepts of sustainable development and local regeneration. The emphasis on sustainability underlines the importance of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the inheritance of future generations. Local regeneration tries to bring a degree of social balance to economic development with a view to achieving sustainable communities through futures that allow people to enjoy a decent quality of life (Powell & Geoghegan 2004:267). Hence they see the goal for community development as to democratise democracy in a genuinely socially inclusive form. As was identified in the previous chapter, this was seen to be an intrinsic part of the aims in community development as a practice (Ife 1995).

As for the question of "who practices community development?", an early observation by Thomas (1983:11) in the United Kingdom, was that these "practitioners are, on the whole, well educated, white middle-class people (with more men than women) and mostly in their 20s and 30s; in more recent years they have been joined by older working-class recruits and by people from ethnic groups, many of whom have previously participated as members of neighbourhood organisations[....] it is a specialist function though its ideas and methods have also influenced practice in other professions". Here Thomas was differentiating community work from community activities and activism and concentrated upon workers who were paid to carry out an intervention into processes within neighbourhoods and agencies. Interestingly he identified that these workers required a certain degree of experience and specific skills. This highlighting of the required experience and skills is a common emphasis in discussions about community

development, where it is frequently acknowledged that it is easier to describe community development than to define the work (Powell & Geoghegan 2004:18).

So whilst there are many sources of lists as to who the practitioners are (for example the Australian Community Workers Association, which was founded in 2011, has a list of thirty nine occupational titles), they are defined more through skills, requiring potential members to demonstrate competency in five core areas before being accepted (www.acwa.org.au). Whilst acknowledging that there is difficulty in defining the term, there is some commonality in describing community development. For example it is a discourse of social action informed by communitarian values that aims to promote social inclusion and democratic participation; 'people power' is a popular slogan; and consciousness-raising is a core construct. However, Popple (1995:4) in acknowledging the problems inherent in defining community development states that "the term community work is a contested concept and there is no universally agreed meaning [...] the fluidity in its definition presents particular problems and challenges". Popple suggests that there is an intimate connection between community development (or community work in his parlance) and political values, where he points out that some theorists employ a democratic pluralist model whilst others a distinctly radical and socialist line. Powell & Geoghegan (2004:19) believe that Popple's distinction ultimately rests on understanding the ideology behind the practice.

Building upon this understanding, which has already been highlighted in the previous chapter in Giddens theory of structuration (1984:25), Lynn (2006:110) similarly agrees that the practitioner cannot be understood without understanding the context for the work. Hence she highlights that the type of community development work carried out depends upon the discourse (or ideology) within which it occurs. Lynn believes this because the breadth of the concept of 'community' allows for it to be critiqued as an ephemeral and romantic fiction, but also to be used and exploited by government. It is because it retains such power to evoke reaction and contest that an understanding is needed of the power that drives it and the ideological purpose for which it may be used or misused.

Lynn (2006:112) goes on to identify ten discourses that influence and help to determine the type of social work possible in any community and role the practitioner carries out. The first four of these discourses are essentially economic rationalist: being the devolution of the state to community; the community as agent of government (contractually or in partnerships) and the community as organisations, all reflecting positions adopted by current governments. Hence Lynn sees the social work carried out

in the pure economic rationalist situation of ‘devolution of the state to the community’ as restricting notions of social justice and the work comprising mainly private therapy. Then in ‘agent of government’, values of competition and self-reliance are promoted rather than values of support and diversity, and finally ‘community as organisation’ professional expertise rather than community based endogenous practice is fostered.

Lynn’s (2006:118) discourses seem to artificially separate types of practice and political context, providing more of ideal type analysis. In daily practice and real life, there can be a number of factors affecting a situation – assuming a choice of what could be appropriate practice. For the practitioner – this gives rise to ongoing tension between what is the correct practice and what they are trying to achieve. Taylor (2003:213-231) provides an alternative view and identifies the practitioner as the social change agent in a globalisation/world capitalism situation and points to the creation of action networks (Carley & Smith in Taylor 2003:226) as ‘flexible, non-hierarchical, democratic and consensus-seeking partnerships between different interests, spanning sectors, localities, regions, whole countries and even the globe’. Taylor gives an update of the British context in a globalised world and argues that the practitioner needs not just a sophisticated idea of power but also a lot more information about the networks that are formed within communities and the importance of both strong and weak ties to those who live there.

Whilst this brief exploration of who practitioners are is limited by the few works associated with this question (in this case related to Ireland, the United Kingdom and Australia), it has served to reinforce the earlier conclusions (chapter 5), that community development practitioners practice is mainly described in terms of the skills and experience of the practitioner and the context within which they are operating. Consequently, the context of the work is very important when understanding how practitioners make sense of their work.

As will be seen later in this chapter, all those interviewed had their own ‘making sense’ process, to which most referred as their ‘frameworks’. [Frameworks are also explored later in this chapter]. However, in order to understand these frameworks better, this next section looks further at the context from which practitioners might observe the term ‘community’, and consequently from what point of reference are they carrying out their ‘making sense’ process?

Back To Basics – Making Sense Of What And In What Way?

The initial question in this making sense process of community practice often

begins with querying what is actually meant by the word 'community' in community development practice.

In response to this question, many writers (for example: Wilmott 1986; Lee and Newby 1983 and Crow & Allan 1994) have explored the concept of community either as a place in terms of a framework (Wilmott 1986) where people have something to share in common – geographically; or as an interest (Hogget 1997:7) sharing common characteristics other than place, for example religion; or as a communion (Cohen 1985:12) from a framework of an attachment to a place or a spiritual experience.

Meanwhile, Cohen (1985:12) identifies 'community' as a group of people who have something in common with each other. In looking for some definition, Cohen sees the 'symbolic aspect of community boundary' as being important in encapsulating the identity of a community, as it is at the boundary that differences with outside the community are clarified. For him the subjective commonalities of community exist in the minds of members, rather than being an objective similarity.

In exploring the dimensions of community development, Powell & Geoghegan (2004:172) looked into the literature for what 'community' meant to those involved. Despite finding in the literature 'community' was considered much more than just a simple equation with locality, for example with ideas of communities of interest, they did find to the contrary in their surveys of community development workers that they attached considerable importance to frameworks of place and locality in their work. The surveys showed that, in terms of relationship to locality, community played a significant part in the conceptualisation of community development workers for over two thirds of their respondents.

The dilemmas of looking for this meaning are highlighted by Hillery (1968) who stresses how difficult it is to agree on a definition of community. He took a total of 14 years seeking a definition and points out that 'sociologists have employed no less than 16 concepts in formulating 94 different definitions' (Hillery 1968:3). He concludes that community is used in three ways; firstly as a quality (generally referring to people having something in common, whether goods, rights or character); secondly as a body of people/ a social system; and thirdly community pertaining to a common land or territory. Hillery elects for a 3 fold approach in identifying community – as a folk village; a city; and a total institution. However, he then comes down to the first two and uses the term "vill" as referring to folk villages and cities (Hillery 1968:64).

Behind Hillery's reduction from three to two is the often experienced

inclination to not include people in the definition when talking about community as described by **Interviewee 6**: *“There is a consistent trend across the whole development industry, when people are thinking about a new place and the creation of a new place, they think about physical infrastructure. The planners do. They think about the roads and the parks and where the shopping centre is going and the orientation of houses. The developers do. They think about investing into making pretty parks and lakes and that sort of thing. Then, with the local government, their focus is about how they are going to maintain the parks and some provision of community facilities. Hardly ever do we come across a local government that has actually got a plan of how they are going to get that community functioning through creating opportunities for the community to come together. Hardly ever does that happen. Whilst local governments say they put money into community development, it is actually just the provision of facilities and in most cases their facilities are lying vacant. Yet at the end of last year one of the local governments were looking at rationalising their community facilities because it appeared that most of them had hardly any usage.”*

This lack of uniformity in understanding that working with community involves working with people gives rise to works by writers like Giddens (1993:163) who emphasises what he calls the social world. He says that unlike in the world of nature, and in acknowledgement of the central need to work with people, he says that working with people is a skilled accomplishment of active human subjects, and the way that the world is made meaningful, accountable or intelligible relies upon a medium of practical activity. For Giddens the work of social scientists draws upon the same kind of skills as those whose conduct they seek to analyse, in order to describe it. ‘The generation of descriptions about this social conduct depends upon the hermeneutic task of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in producing and reproducing the social world’ (p 163). Through highlighting this understanding, some valid direction is given for the tasks in community development practice and provides insight into how practitioners make sense of how to perform their tasks, in a way that differentiates them from the active human subjects.

Yet despite Giddens (1993:168) developing a framework of how the production and reproduction of society is a skilled performance on the part of its members – he does say that it is definitely not the case that the actors are wholly aware of what these skills are, or how they manage the exercise. This suggests either a spontaneous development of this production or that, with greater insight, more purposeful and deliberate practice might be identified. This lack of being aware of how these skills are managed is evident from the admission in the reflections of **Interviewee 1**: *‘For Giddens it was how we create our own society, it is about awareness. A parallel between the way*

that Giddens thinks about macro and micro clinically, and me seeing how I work with my colleague, is the difference between me working at the community micro level and him at the macro level. I can see without really thinking which works for me. It is actually Giddens in practice, but until this moment I would never have thought of the parallel.'

This 'Giddens in practice' appears where he (Giddens 1993:166) notes a basic framework in observing that this creation of society is produced through the interaction of three aspects which he sees as the constitution of meaning, morality (with its sense of value) and relations of power. He describes the resultant structure as a 'duality' – since the structure appears both as a condition and as a consequence of the production of the interaction. Hence he sees that, whilst human beings produce society, they do so as historically located actors and not under conditions of their own choosing. (This lays the basis for Giddens' development of his structuration framework as identified in chapter 5).

This reference to history and working in conditions not of the workers choosing, suggests that to be successful in community work, in any interpretation framework there needs to be an understanding of the context from where the worker is operating. This is highlighted by *Interviewee 7* "You can have the tools, you can have techniques, you can have methodology, you can have your frameworks—all of that I have done, but at the time of putting it into practice it depends on the situation, the context, and it depends on the relationships for the results that you get."

This section has provided some understanding of what community practice is. Firstly it is seen to be about the creation of society through the involvement of people in a locality (the community). It is where the practitioner works in a skilled intentional way, though not necessarily understanding how that is done. Then, whilst acknowledging his/her difference from the human participants, the practitioner is sensitive the context of the work. These all provide insights into what community practice is. However, none give advice and direction on what the practitioner actually does. This all reinforces Giddens observations about actors not being aware of the skills and how to manage the exercise.

To develop this insight further, there follows a discussion of from what perspectives community practitioners might base their understanding of required action.

Community Seen in a Framework of Change over Time

The writers mentioned so far all have another thing in common, that is they

see community work (or society creation) as involving change. Because change is about movement, identifying some aspects resulting in the movement might provide data towards some practical advice for a skilled worker. Indeed this is a major commonality for writers like Giddens who sees this community process as one of movement and change, in producing and reproducing society along an historical path. Hillery too (1968:185), whilst seeing the structure of community as an 'ideal type' framework of community organisation i.e. a system of institution formed by people who live together, though not necessarily with a specific goal, also sees community in terms of communal change, with change within a communal organisation (from folk village to city); change in type to type (neighbourhood to communal organisation) and change from one social organisation to another (social movement to communal organisation). Hillery (1968:188) also sees the process as one of change over time and distinguishes communal from formal organisation through utilising the term 'vill' which he considers functions in terms of three community components: space; cooperation; and family. These ideas of communal change, people being together and family/cooperation, also all emphasise a focus on relationship.

German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies encapsulated this mentioned notion of change as early as 1887, with his framework of *gemeinschaft and gesellschaft*. *Gemeinschaft* (Nisbet 1970:74) translates easily into 'community', whilst *gesellschaft* into 'society' (this latter with a high degree of individualism, impersonality and contractualism). For Tonnies these are Weberian 'ideal types', with elements of each in both. Both Weber and Durkheim (Cohen 1985:23) saw the change as a shift moving from 'folk' to 'city'; from kin where they know everyone to where they have to weave their own way; from face to face existence as total persons in the rural setting in linear argument to the urban. So essentially this is a theory of historical social change, from medieval to capitalist, from family (with isolation but tensions with others) to 'interest'. Durkheim saw society developing consciousness through communal action, which was more than the individual. Similarly Weber saw relationship as communal, when based upon the feelings of the parties whereby they belong to each other and are implicated in each other's total existence (Nisbet 1970:80).

Tonnies introduced values, seeing, *gemeinschaft* as the home of morality, the seat of virtue, continually striving for good – with emanations of love, honour, loyalty and friendship (Nisbet 1970: 76). The implication for practitioners is a resultant tension with the moral element being strong, with *gemeinschaft* seen as 'good' and there never being 'bad' in community. So in the creation of *gemeinschaft* the worker is the artisan, an artist or professional using skills to seek virtuous goals and the 'good', whilst in

gesellschaft, the product brings reversal, with remuneration in money without 'good' being a major consideration. This idea of the worker as an artisan is reinforced by a number of writers: Ife (1995: 202) describes practitioners 'doing a lot of things at once and that in any single activity or project a worker is likely to be filling several of these roles and will move between one or another all the time'. Meanwhile for both Weber and Tonnies relationship is important and, in discussing gemeinschaft, they introduce a judgement on values that is seen to be creating 'good'.

Taylor (2003:11), a more recent analyst, identifies community and community development practice as offering resources, social glue, alternative ideas and knowledge that are seen as essential to society in creating the morality and good that Tonnies saw. In this way Taylor goes further than Tonnies who did not elaborate upon exactly how this good is brought about.

Taylor's community framework (2003:34) is both a description and a prescription of the creation of community. Yet whilst as a description, the framework could be seen as a group or network of people who share something in common or interact with each -other, although they may share common characteristics e.g. beliefs and activities, this does not mean that they identify as a community, as for Taylor this requires them to have common interests e.g. common economic interests, social relationships or experiences of power. For Taylor it is these common interests which provide the glue that can turn community from a simple description into an active agent, where relationships are strong and have a purpose.

Taylor's observation is supported in the research where *Interviewee 2* describes the need for a common interest and action orientation: "*For the processes to be any good, involvement in the tasks is important, if the people are not actually doing it themselves then you are not achieving capacity building. The processes must get people to problem solve and to realise what it would take to achieve things realistically – what can be achieved and how.*"

This section has served to highlight how community practice can be seen as a process of change over time. The discussion has also reinforced the use of values which promote the good, which was already identified in the analysis in chapter 5. The process of change has also brought with it suggestions that relationships can be fostered, like social glue resulting in the development of the community, provided these relationships are combined to achieve a common interest.

Normative Frameworks of Community

Consequently as was seen in the previous section, the notion of what community practitioners seek to achieve seems to be closely associated with what is understood to be a 'good' community. As has already been explored in the chapter on building purposeful relationships (chapter 3) the evolution of this understanding can be seen to have derived from earlier works which reinforced the push to return to and revive the time when there were 'closer, warmer, more harmonious type of bonds between people' (Elias 1974 in Hoggett 1997:5). However, also in that chapter, the key to positive relationships for a good community was seen to be directly related to the nature of those relationships and not in their mere existence (Lee and Newby 1983:57). Taylor (2003) builds upon this with a prescription of a very much 'normative concept of community, as a place of solidarity, participation and coherence; carrying with it assumptions about the way we should live' (p36). This normative concept of community serves to highlight Tonnies' (Nisbet 1970:74) point in contrasting *gesellschaft* with its the impersonality of mass society and the state, with *gemeinschaft* portrayed as the positive normative model.. So although there are relationships in *gesellschaft*, they are not seen to be the positive relationships of *gemeinschaft* where achieving good is the aim.

Nisbet (1960:82) sees this normative goal identified for community development practice in achieving good as not just one for state policies, which he describes as populist enthusiasm. Rather he says that it is also a regular and normal means of meeting human needs for recognition, fellowship, security and membership. To achieve this, Nisbet sees the need for mediating structures such as the family and small informal groups to spread power in society and to check the tendency of concentrating power in the hands of the state.

So this normative framework of community practice can therefore be considered applicable for interventions which ascribe recognition, fellowship, trust, cohesion and security to the community. Indeed, this normative framework is the basis for the communitarian school which itself is based on normative reciprocity and 'morally charged concepts about the obligations and expectations one has to people one lives closest to' (Taylor 2003:40). The communitarian school similarly sees the family as being of the highest importance and the community as the site for moral norms, obligations, responsibilities and rights. In a similar manner, Putnam (2000) uses the term normative to focus on the importance of creating relationships of trust in 'making democracy work'. He defined the normative as features of social life and social capital with networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue

shared objectives. Allan (1996:2) also sees that the civil society approach as emphasising informal relationships and the direct collective engagement of citizens and consumers in economic, social and political development. Hence Putnam, Allan and Taylor all see the normative in terms of values and an apparent sense of stability.

As can be seen, the concepts and frameworks of community, civil society, communitarianism, social capital, mutuality and networks (Taylor 2003:49) are frequently associated in the literature with integration and social cohesion, trust and reciprocity, autonomy and plurality with the flexibility to negotiate the enormously complex tensions of the postmodern society. However, these tensions are not just about values alone, they include incorporating values into a changing context.

The Normative in a Time of Change

Practitioners as part of the community development profession have general agreement over the values inherent in a normative framework (chapter 5). Similarly there is agreement that their processes and practice are about change (chapter 4). In order to make sense of their practice they have found it useful to use the concepts of community and civil society to be seen as alternatives to both state and market, whilst seeing social capital as a much neglected resource that can bring access to other resources as well as strengthening democratic life. Yet to make sense of what actions might be required at a particular time further analysis can be useful.

Hence Taylor (2003:17) being driven by the need to take this general analysis further, introduced the historical context, exploring the political process and the policy context of community change policies in the United Kingdom, which she portrayed as having undergone several metamorphoses on the last half of the 20th century, and saw a framework of distinct themes.

Firstly she saw *community deficit*, which underpinned post 1945 approaches whereby developing skills and capacity was an approach behind top down colonial processes. Restoring community was also a post war policy aimed at improving the physical environment after the experience of war time displacement. Later this experience was seen in terms of welfare dependency.

In *System failure* Taylor (2003:21), saw the need for better coordination in the war on poverty, due to the increasing complexity of modern government and public services. Later it reappeared in notions of 'social exclusion units' in the UK.

Structural and economic failure, resulted in the War on Poverty and UK National Development Programmes unravelling in the UK following the 1970s oil crisis. The 1980s saw a concentration on the economy with policies only allowing for the trickle-down effect to those in poverty.

Then the final theme was *area based policies*, which Taylor saw as largely unsuccessful and mainly concentrating on local inclusion and not addressing larger structural issues.

In summary, Taylor saw that the first theme, of 'community and self-help', dominated in the 1950s and 60s. Then 'economic development and consumer choice' in the 1980s, followed by 'partnership and governance' more recently. Though none were exclusive, traces of all are found throughout. Her analysis provides a useful framework for the context in which circumstances, policies and programmes with particular aims were developed. As a framework of understanding the historical context it is useful but it does not lead to an understanding of what the practitioner may do as a result.

A study that did build upon this historical context and resultant change to inform worker practice was by Powell & Geoghegan (2004: 178). They looked at recent trends in community practice, particularly the features of 'new social movements' which they saw as having arisen since the transition from organised capitalism to globalised capitalism. In this transition they noted the emphasis of community development upon 'participative democracy', as a process that is used because when people are included in decisions they are more likely to take ownership and be more productive in the common goal sought. It is also a process that is valued in its own right as being a morally vigorous way of making decisions. In their research they also identified a shift away from participatory ideals firstly due to the demands placed on groups as a result of new local democracy structures and secondly due to the process of bureaucratisation which community development had gone through with changes to funding arrangements. Their analysis was that this phenomenon had given rise to concern about the nature of community representation within local democracy and structures becoming somewhat stagnant as a result of representation often gravitating to the same people (Powell & Geoghegan 2004: 188). The explicit emphasis from these authors was to encourage people participation as part of practice.

In this fairly recent research by Powell and Geoghegan (2004), the respondent practitioners self-identified community development as a practice that attempted to accomplish fundamental social change. For the majority, community development appeared to be firmly rooted in a liberal (European interpretation) humanistic framework with an emphasis on the value, capacity

and worth of individuals, rather than an explicit challenge to structured social relationships. Hence the practice identified had an emphasis on consensus rather than on conflict. Three main areas of work emerged from this research as the focus for community practice: development programmes for individuals; identity based groups; and general social services provided by and for the community. In terms of the groups that these activities targeted, people living in poverty, those experiencing educational disadvantage and unemployed people featured most prominently; which linked the concept of community development work specifically with anti- poverty work.

Whilst Powell and Geoghegan (2004) do reinforce an orientation of social change informed by a set of values, they also add analysis that the work is often targeted towards those in poverty. This research is quite unique as it details the type of work done by those they interviewed and also it is important for challenging other generalisations about community that occur in the literature. Despite documenting three levels of material, they are not definitive in coming up with some useful framework for understanding how the work is done, neither do they explain the shift away from participation ideas – though they do point to increasing bureaucratisation. Indirectly they do infer similar movements and change that Putnam (2000:19) identifies in his observations of reduced social capital. Both these aspects, reduced social capital and increased bureaucratisation, appear attributable to aspects identified by Tonnies (Nisbet 1970) as social change occurring in the movement from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft*.

Then there is McIntyre (1995:11) for who community development literature is also concerned with theories of poverty, which is consistent with the already mentioned direction found by Powell & Geoghegan (2004). This means that concepts such as basic needs, the cycle of poverty and the culture versus situational perspectives on poverty have strong implications for practice. The way in which poverty is understood affects how poor people are perceived and how community development is approached. As a framework, poverty is seen to be caused by social structures which shape life chances, consequently community development will facilitate efforts to achieve civic rights and responsibility. This is where McIntyre (1995) highlights the central importance for community development in understanding the perceived reality of the participants, ‘because it provides a way to communicate in the idiom of the people, with whom we are working in partnership’ (McIntyre 1995:11). Apart from the already mentioned work by Giddens (1993:163), this is one of the rare occasions that a practitioner process is mentioned; that is a practice that is influenced by the circumstances of these with whom the work is done.

This combination of frameworks of change with the normative have led us to a

point where the analysis provided by the literature, reinforces the findings in chapters 3 -5 (relationships to ethics) and has implications for guiding practice.

A Third World Perspective

From a third World perspective, Midgley (1981:138) identifies that historically community development's origins are said to be from Africa, South America and India. From Africa it emerged from mass education programmes begun by colonial administrators after the Second World War, whilst in India it was particularly inspired by the work of Gandhi. The development of theory and practice in these settings involved the transformation of community development from the colonial perspective identified by Taylor (2003:17) as being a top down process whereby information was conveyed, to one involving people. In demonstration of this in South America, Freire (1997:46) proposed the abolition of what he called the transmission mentality in education and communication and a replacement by a more liberating framework of communication education, that would contain dialogue and would be more receiver centred and more conscious of social structure. Freire proposed the abolishment of the distinction between giver and receiver in as much as they were both learners, through a process of "conscientization", which is a step on from McIntyre's partnership (1995:11). In conscientization the analysis flowed from the person's knowledge/analysis of their position and what was seen to be the problem. Through this process people gained insights into their circumstances so that they could then change these circumstances.

This third world perspective with its liberating framework has been clearly useful for

Interviewee 8 who reflected upon the changes it can bring: "My work is about hope – a way forward. Whilst I believe that in development work, practice always needs to lead theory, at the same time I am firstly about head (thinking), before heart (feeling), so I analyse it first. My analysis is about 'together we can do more' which is about developing both our own and others' spirit to live more fully. So whilst others have been more about engaging and listening to the people, I have always been about action, a way forward – hence the more Freirian orientation."

Meanwhile in India Gandhi, who stressed the need for dedicated workers who would encourage village participation, believed that community development was seen as less concerned with concepts than it was a framework for action (Midgley

1981:139). In India and South Africa (following Gandhi's influence, the theory of community development evolved a pragmatic approach which

acquired ornamentation and the principles of self-help and self-determination were incorporated. Although not the originator of the principle of non-violence, Gandhi was perhaps the most influential proponent, at least in the twentieth century (Ife 1995:74). He used non-violent methods which emphasised building consensus and not polarising a community. His philosophy attacked ideas and structures, but not people and from this non-violence perspective structures which perpetuated inequality, poverty and oppression were considered are by their nature to be violent and needed to be opposed. Again the emphasis is on values, consensus and poverty. Yet Gandhi is criticised for his values (Wijewardena in Ife 1995:94), for showing 'western' type concern for making life worth living for India's poor, stating that his moral values were incompatible with the traditional culture of India for which he campaigned, including its use of the term 'violence' in non-violence.

Whilst the non-violent perspective is both a powerful and radical framework, it demands major questioning of accepted practices and structures. The influence of the non-violent philosophy on community development has been significant (Kelly & Sewell 1988) and this is explained in this chapter by *Interviewee 8* where he/she talks about Gandhi's practice framework 'My Experiments With Truth' (Gandhi 1957).

United Kingdom Perspective

Having already looked at some of the western world evolution of community development in terms of a normative concept, I now explore community developments' evolution in the United Kingdom. I do this as many of my influences derive from that region, including through my experiences of education and training.

In the United Kingdom, the term 'community work' does have a relatively short history, because it was only in the late 1950s and early 1960s that accounts of practice and theoretical explorations began to appear which viewed community workers to be in a distinct occupation. Prior to this there were seen to be separate groups of workers such as community centre wardens, secretaries of councils of social services and development workers on new housing estates, who did not possess a common occupational identity. As Thomas (1983:25) highlighted in his work for the Gulbenkian Foundation the orientation of community work was to the educational, that is being an informing or advising discipline.

Earlier, the Younghusband Report (1959) on social work had become a significant turning point. This report was influenced by Younghusband's even

earlier research, including an international survey of Social Work Training (Younghusband 1947), which specifically drew on the North American division where social work had been written about for much longer and had become divided between casework, group work and community organisation. However, it was not until the use of the terms community development and community work became popular and tended to merge that the work became to mainly mean projects focused on work with local neighbourhood groups to help them identify and meet their own needs. This change in focus was symbolised by the Gulbenkian Foundation setting up in a study group in 1966, to look at the nature and future of community work in the UK. This group identified community work within a framework as:

“essentially concerned with affecting the course of social change through the two processes of analysing social situations and forming relationships with different groups to bring about some desirable change” (Thomas 1983:19).

So here again change is at the centre of the work and the two methods identified as essential to the work are:

- a) social analysis and
- b) forming relationships to bring about desirable change.

They go on to say that these methods have three main aims or purposes:

- 1) the first being the democratic process of involving people in thinking, deciding, planning and playing an active part in the development and operation of services that affect their daily lives;
- 2) the second relating to the value for personal fulfilment in belonging to a community;
- 3) the third concerned with the need in community planning, to think of actual people in relation to other people and the satisfaction of their needs as persons, rather than focussing attention upon a series of separate needs and problems” (Calouste Gulbenkian 1968).

These three aims suggest that community work practice seeks to achieve value laden democratic goals; personal fulfilment; and planning which takes into account people’s satisfaction of being with people – all as part of community involvement. It is suggested that change be effected through analysis and relationship building which aims towards the values associated with democratic ideals, personal fulfilment and planning which elevates people satisfaction to the foremost importance. It appears the importance of people with common interests who seek their goals within the locality influenced by their relationships.

Summarising the Important Aspects of Community Practice.

In this section the question that I seek to address is whether there is some common message to be drawn from these interviews and writers that can guide community development practice. Indeed do they suggest a common framework?

Giddens (1993:163) certainly identified the importance in community practice of the 'skilled work' of social scientists, who for themselves to be successful need to draw upon the skilled work of their active human subjects. Hence he highlights a combination of valued skills, as a conscious process amongst practitioners who promote change towards some 'morality'; suggesting a value orientation. McIntyre (1995:11) is very similar to Giddens, in emphasising the central importance for community development as a process in understanding the perceived reality of the participants. Hillery (1968:188) also saw community as change over time, noting the importance of cooperation and family as being major elements on relationships that contribute to the change.

Tonnies (Nisbet 1970) highlighted 'gemeinschaft' and values as of central importance, with notions of virtue and morality, but historically seeing change occurring towards *gesellschaft*, where the emphasis was not on relationships and was less desirable and more individually focused. Powell and Geoghegan (2004:178) and Taylor (2003:21) provided an analysis of policy and the work moving from a more local emphasis to one that concentrated upon a societal structural level. It could be argued, it moves from a *gemeinschaft* situation to one where *gesellschaft* or larger society forces take precedence. Taylor (2003), like Tonnies, identifies community development practice as the glue to create a society of morality and value. Again relationships, morality and values came to the fore.

Normative ideals were seen as achieving good communities, with the proviso the relationships were oriented towards creating this type of community and Nisbet (1960:82) saw that family relationships and those of small informal groups were a positive element of forming 'good' communities.

The communitarian school and Putnam (Taylor 2003:40) focussed on the values of 'making democracy work' through the creation of relationships to achieve shared objectives, with Putnam noting an emphasis upon the importance and close relationship of social capital (relationships) with a civic society. He noted how people relate the term 'community' with a deep sense of belonging, to intimate social networks, especially family and friends.

In the third world, whilst Gandhi provided a societal analysis, both his work and that of Paulo Freire concentrated upon the development of relationships, being pragmatic and practical in approach, emphasising self-help, whilst challenging structural institutions.

Then in the UK Thomas (1983:19) emphasised the aims of community development as being democratically valued and people oriented, achieving this through building purposeful relationships. The UK Gulbenkian Report was another important research being the first substantive report that focussed upon community work. It surveyed the nature of community work in the UK in the 1960s, seeking to make sense of its functions and aims, and argued for the development of training in community development.

It is evident in all this that there are some similarities across analysis and research in acknowledging that change is part of the process of developing community and that a movement from *gemeinschaft* to *gesellschaft* is undesirable, in moving from the good to the less good. As a result, the values approach of the 'normative' are highlighted as important together with relationships being seen as central to any process of change and institutions like the family being strongly associated with a good community.

Caution in Emphasising One Framework

Whilst in search of these commonalities in practice, it is worth acknowledging words of caution, some of which have already been mentioned.

As with Hillery's difficulty in defining the term 'community', Ife (1995) also highlighted the pitfalls and difficulties of seeking common definitions, common understandings or a common framework for community development practice. As a result he, like other writers, concentrated upon and described the skills and tasks required in community work. He believed that there are no shortcuts to identifying, developing and learning the skills of community work practice, despite the existence of a number of suggested frameworks in 'cook book' type texts (e.g. Ward 1993). Ife (1995) said it is not possible to learn community practice from such texts and gives four principal reasons.

Firstly, the way these 'cook book' texts structure the process of community practice assumes that there is some linear ordered process. Ife said that the writers represent the process as they would like to see it rather than for the messy process that it is. Secondly, he stated that every community is different and what works in one community may not work in another. Thirdly, for Ife not only is every community different but so too he believed is every

community worker because a community worker has to develop her/his skills in such a way that they are consistent with her/his own style, personality and methods of communicating. Ife said that a cook book approach can lead to a worker trying to be like somebody else. Finally, Ife said that the cook book approach tended to treat skills in isolation, as if they are things which can be learned in and of themselves. Skills, he said, are intimately tied up with values and knowledge, and to discuss them in isolation from values and knowledge is to make an artificial separation that is characteristic of a mechanistic paradigm rather than a holistic approach. This view reinforces that already expressed by Giddens (1993:163), and highlights the contextual nature of community development.

Meekosha and Mowbray (1995:144) appear to agree with Ife and his observation about Ward and other 'cook book' writers, querying their authenticity and calling them 'a collection of untheorised articles'. Certainly Ward (1993) writes without clarifying a context for the book or a stance for himself. He divides his work into an apparent mixture of uncoordinated issues and short articles in sections entitled 'macro questions', 'worker issues' and 'agency issues', which are reproduced without any explanation or context. Ife (1995:249) warned not to seek a simple answer by imposing a single framework on all community practitioners which he believed falls into the positivist and modernist trap of assuming there is only one 'right' and 'best' way to do community work.

Whilst there is some truth in Ife's observations, he does miss a crucial point in that Ward and other 'cook book' writers do identify and name certain problematic situations, before then prescribing some answers or strategies. So there is some provision of information on the context of the work. However the situations can be seen differently by different people who may not see the problem as being the same as authors like Ward and hence may not agree on what might be appropriate practice. It is because social situations are not commonly labelled, but seen differently by varying observers that the notion of the 'art' of community work arises. Indeed it is the process of interpreting situations (the hermeneutics) which requires in depth exploration and insight, because the understanding process of the interpreter and the context of their work is important in order to understand what might be relevant practice in a particular context for a particular worker.

An Art-form: Practitioners Making Sense of their Practice.

An outcome sought in this thesis is new knowledge to better understand how to build good communities. This is sought through integrating what appears in the literature with the experience brought to life by the practitioners,

interviewed for this research, making sense of their practice. As outlined earlier referring particularly to Kolb (1984) the chapters of this thesis are presented within an action learning framework, because this is a framework that I believe best describes my approach to attempting to make sense of my work over the past 40 years, and complements the bricolage methodology of this research.

As indicated in the Methodology (chapter 2), action learning is part of the experiential school, and many of the proponents see Kolb's learning cycle as its theoretical learning base (Kolb 1984:38-41). Action learning is therefore very relevant to this research because it includes the reflective process of learning both from past experience and from knowledge. Action learning is also a useful tool to understand what has happened if the research interviews have resulted in learning by both the interviewer and the practitioner. Importantly, I as a researcher am also adding to my knowledge and skills through this process. Hence this chapter's emphasis on reflection and making sense.

The first chapter of this thesis was the story of how my community development practice developed, then I detailed the experiences that have influenced my practice, the dilemmas encountered and the lessons learnt which I then used to develop my own purposeful practice. For many years of my working life, and particularly since the late 1970s, I have endeavoured to make sense of the work I was doing. This was not just a 'making sense' process per se, it was one whereby I reflected on what I was doing in order to learn both from what I saw and, in parallel, with what I read; to then use this analysis to plan and make my work more effective.

In this research I have drawn parallels between my own experience and the common challenges faced by community development practitioners. So it was not surprising that I should find that the practitioners who were interviewed for this research also sought to make sense of their work. This is shown in some of the following quotations:

Interviewee 4 said *"So what am I trying to do in all this?"*

Interviewee 3 identified *"looking at what there is to happen, looking at the situation and asking the question 'what does this mean that we do?'"*

Interviewee 5 believed *"it is important to say 'How do we get out of here? How do we move forward? What is the plan that we need? Who do we need to get involved?'"*

Interviewee 7 confirmed *"I always do my mapping first and ask 'What*

do we have'?"

This 'making sense' process can be seen in a number of ways, no less than by some of the writers on community practice. Both Tonnies (in Nisbet 1970:76) and Ife (1995:202), suggest that community practitioners use this making sense process as 'artisans', artists or professionals using skills to seek virtuous goals. This is also highlighted by Flyvberg (2001:2) who argues that: "*Community work (his term was 'social practice') is in essence more of an art than a science.*"

This notion of an art-form, as an ability of the practitioner to change practice direction depending on context, is emphasised by McIntyre (1995) and other writers, who identify the tools as frameworks in community development practice, which are developed by practitioners to ensure that the practice they follow is suitable for the identified situation. Those interviewed often mention 'frameworks' but what do they mean by this term?

In talking about frameworks *interviewee 4* clarifies: "*What I mean by framework is both a way of understanding my work, and then a way of guiding my work, of structuring my work.*"

Interviewee 7 adds to this clarification: "*My framework frames my practice, and my life. It has a lot to do with myself. It is a personal tool that I utilise in my public affairs. It is both personal and public. My framework is a tool to identify for myself, where I am going, if I am on the right track somehow, and, if I need to reflect, I can get back to my framework and identify what is missing that I am unhappy with.*" He/she goes on to say: "*My framework is 'almost' my Bible, but it is somehow a tool that is me, because I made it. I selected all the dimensions that are important in my life and in my practice, so it also guides me during storms, because normally when I am in trouble I have a look at my framework and identify, 'Uh-uh, this is where you are; this is why you are not' - - It tells me to get out of situations when I reflect on my framework. I guess it guides me, it supports me.*"

Interviewee 3 summarises 'framework' from her/his practice perspective: "*The whole of my practice is driven by my framework, which is my awareness which drives my questions, which get people to explore issues and to see if they have a path forward to resolve issues themselves. My practice framework summarises the way I work. This framework resulted from a combination of my community work at university where I did social work, together with my community development workshops that I did with Tony (Kelly) being very significant.*"

Making me develop my own framework is the greatest gift that Tony gave me.

He set us an exercise and said work out what are the things that inform the way you work, your practice. So my framework is conceptual and practical, a 'How I am now' – with susceptibilities to frailties. It is diagrammatic, but it is also an ongoing tool, and it is also one that I use in my casework. I mean it has become so much a part of my practice that I can speak to it comfortably. I talk from my framework. My framework drives my questions. It is my awareness."

Interviewee 4 reinforces interviewee 3's observations: *"It comes back to what helps you to have a sense of self; that is a strong framework, a framework that you believe in and that you know has value. I think that (framework) contributes to that strong sense of self. The single challenge by Tony (Kelly) to develop my own practice framework was probably the single most important influence in my work. In that framework, I don't think there is anything new, it just brought it into a framework what makes profound sense to me"*

Interviewee 8 adds a spiritual dimension in talking generally about frameworks: *"Practice frameworks help us to better understand spirituality – which suggests a coherent whole, rather than a religious spirit. For great development workers spirituality means a crafting of core ideas, beliefs and values into a coherent whole from which they could identify and access wisdom and orchestrate skilled and caring action. So practice frameworks should be an expression of spirituality, to work at the right level to nurture our spirit and that of others. It is a diversity of ways that develop spirit. Different frameworks work for different people, because of their differing backgrounds and situations. It is our frameworks that organise our central influences and our practice that breathes life into them that constitutes our spirituality, and to nurture our spirit and others we need a practice framework to survive."*

From all these observations it can be seen that all these practitioners understand frameworks as the way that they make sense of their own way of carrying out effective community practice.

What Do These Frameworks Look Like?

To investigate what these frameworks might actually look like, I invited the interviewees to describe in their own words how they themselves understood their work to be structured.

For **interviewee 1** his/her framework is dependent: *"on doing three things, that is behaving with honesty, respect, and with inquiry. By inquiry, I mean really open conversation, being really active and involving. From carrying*

out all three, if carried out well, you get three rewards. The rewards are trust, acceptance, and understanding. The two groupings of behaviour and the rewards can be imagined as if they are in two circles that overlap. In the middle of the overlap of the circles is love, which can also be called 'relationships.'

So this framework highlights normative values and is one of ensuring involvement.

Interviewee 3 says: *"My effective work derives from my background and the important work and training figures who are relevant to my practice. My framework is about my background, my values, where I come from. Another aspect is the history of people with whom I am working. So where they have come from, what their influences are, what their world is like. The third aspect is the issues, and it then becomes an amalgamation of all three at the end of the picture building process. This amalgamation is the place for the analysis, which results in deciding what we do and where to start from. The energies I guess come down to - you talk about relationship building and that is just time, spending time with people, talking to them about their ideas, theories, issues, then holding that in a way that means that I build, recognize when this identification is recurring."*

This more complex framework again acknowledges values, this time belonging to the practitioner. Like McIntyre (1995) there is emphasis on understanding the people with whom the practitioner is working and then there is an agreement on common issues to be worked upon.

In a similar manner **interviewee 7** describes the elements and source of her/his practice framework: *"my framework has my very strong values and beliefs in my culture, in what I learned from my parents. It is very strong, it is about giving, social justice. It is about all those values that drive me. So it is about being happy, the rights of the individual to be heard, it is about freedom and equal opportunities – through all of which I believe the world could be improved and become a beautiful planet. My framework is about knowing that you are important, having a lot to offer, but also respecting, accepting, and admiring what the other people have. I am very much into the rights of the individual, international rights and the reconciliation process. The right of freedom, the right to have a voice and to be heard. I do believe that people do have the right to be receiving equal opportunities."*

My framework includes 'Planning – Doing –Evaluating'. This is what I always do with the people, in involving the people; it gives them ownership. Evaluating is about improving, you can always improve what you are doing: nothing is perfect. You need to be flexible in your work, which allows for

incorporating lessons learned along the way.”

This practitioner essentially describes the process of action learning, as appears in chapter 2, together with its normative values.

Interviewee 4 elaborates on a number of frameworks that he/she uses in practice: “*So what am I trying to do in all this? Well it is about –*

- *The work of justice which is to sustain*
- *Empowerment which is to attend*
- *Relationship which is to build connections*
- *Turning ideas into action – is to dream*

So to sustain is the work of justice. To attend - - by that I mean what I find really empowering and makes people feel more powerful in their own world; is when you really, really pay attention to their gifts and their strengths and their passions. It is almost like when you pay attention to people they pay attention to themselves and their own gifts. So, that is that work of empowerment and of building leadership. The third element is that of relationship to connect, it is building connections. So, sustain, attend, connect and the fourth one (which is a bit different) is to dream, which is to dream of your own world as you would love it to be and then act as though you can make it so, as though you will make it so; knowing that you won't, but you act towards that.

I am about developing human spirit. This is not possible if the spirit is choked. Developing Human Spirit is central and runs through all my work. An indicator is my own spirit – if I am developing other's spirits then I also feel good.

So right in the middle of those four things are the two words, develop spirit. The word develop is really important to me.

My framework on all this is that around a person there are four realms, self, family, community, and society. The difference between this whole world of self, family and community and the world of society is that in the first it is all relationship based, and it stands or falls on trust. So, this is the world of me, the world of us, and the world of them. In the world of me and us, if you don't have trust things fall apart. The core business - core business in that world - is building trust between people. When people can trust each other, feel good about each other, all sorts of stuff happens. Whilst the world out there in society relies on regulation and compliance, in here it is about trust.

So I build capacity around – justice – individual empowerment – relationships

– turning ideas into action, and for me justice is an equilibrium between needs and aspirations of people, which as I have said is complex.

The wholeness is all part of my overall Framework Self (Me)-Family-Community- Society. The Us is the family and community, the Them is society. The world of me and us is based on ‘trust’ and with ‘trust’ people feel good. The Outside is about ‘regulation’ and not primarily ‘relationships’. When people trust each other all sorts of things start to happen.

I have strived to keep justice in my framework, because otherwise community development can be, ‘Let’s all be nice to each other.’”

This is the most complex description so far. The framework is driven by normative values, as portrayed earlier in this chapter. In addition there is an evident drive to connect at the spiritual/ feeling level. There is a commitment to change which is emphasised as being achieved through relationships.

Providing another perspective, **Interviewees 5 and 6** talk about practice frameworks from an organisational perspective rather than personal practice.

Interviewee 5: *“We have thought about this quite a bit. Community does not happen naturally any more. To do it you need a plan and a deliberate way of doing it. We try to never do anything without a purpose. That is why we developed our ‘models’ as a deliberate way of doing it.”*

This provides a societal structural analysis of what motivates this practice.

Interviewee 6 elaborates: *“Did you ever have those kinds of books at school that were like a 25-page summary of key text that you had to read? Well, that is what this is, which is actually really there as more of an encouragement to get staff to read other stuff?”*

We call this framework the ‘sociology of community’. The idea behind coming up with this was to give people a sense of the different sorts of thinking that is important, the things that you need to be thinking about when you start dealing with the whole idea of community, because community means different things to different people. We share this with workers, and stakeholders – we talk through what this means.

The first model or framework from this is the ‘community audit’ which is the first stage and includes aspirations, history and what gives a place meaning – unfortunately urban planners will have already been there which complicates things. Often we employ a historian to write the story of the

community, the history of the community, because often that is the foundation stone upon which the community is built.

Then there is the whole issue of cultural anthropology, which is often the relationship to place and to history. We look at what is the distinctiveness of a place and what are its features. We talk about cultural anthropology because it is that connection to place, connection to culture with which we link people to each other."

This practitioner describes a formally developed and written framework to guide practice. It describes bringing people together in the process of identifying some sense of commonness or place.

At times in the interviews there were commonalities when the practitioners mentioned other people's frameworks that they found useful. So **interviewee 3** said: *"I do find Doug McCauley's picture building (Picture Building Framework) extremely useful"* (McCauley 1990).

Interviewee 5 mentioned the use of: *"a thing called ADKAR which is awareness, desire, knowledge, ability and reinforcement. A is for Awareness of the need for change; D is the Desire to support and participate in the change; K is Knowledge of how to change; A is the Ability to implement change; R is Reinforcement to sustain the change. (Source: Change-Management-Coach.com)*

If you start to use that and apply it to a community when you are going in to work in that community, then you can actually see where people are stuck and not moving forward in the direction that they wish to go. So it is a change management framework that helps to identify where you are in the change process and what can be needed to continue."

This practitioner clearly emphasises change but the nature of that change is facilitated to derive from what people want.

Interviewee 8 identified other people's frameworks that were important in his/her practice: *"Gandhi's practice framework 'My Experiments With Truth' (Gandhi 1929) is very useful. This title reveals some important lessons for those who seek a development spirituality. The word experiments is very important as it indicates a lack of certainty, trial and error and a position of fundamental humility. As the years have rolled by, I have come to appreciate how wise this title really is.*

Gandhi had four central ideas, beliefs and values that related one to the other and laid the foundation of many ideas that went to make up the fabric of his whole framework. Firstly that if he pursued the Truth of the Matter, this

would unleash the most powerful moral, social and economic forces to rectify matters. In order to unleash that force for good, he had to live in a way that made himself truly available for the service of others, conduct himself in all he did with self-discipline, so that at no stage could his actions be confused with self-interest. Finally he conducted his life to face his most fundamental human weakness Face his Demons.

This practitioner highlights a framework he finds useful and also emphasises spirituality, is value based in humility and the good.

Another important great development thinker to me was Buber who had a framework for a fuller life built around four concepts: ‘Cognition’ knowing that we know, makes possible a sense of morality and doing good or evil – ‘Art’ opens us to the world of art and to externalise or look at things differently – ‘Love’ the capacity to love – ‘Faith’ to believe in ourselves and each other. His analysis suggested that a life lived was not a fixed quantum, that if we opened ourselves to life, life would be richer for it and if we closed ourselves off and away, our life would be the poorer.”

Once again a value driven framework about the good and a sense of spirituality and love, also emphasising relationships.

These last examples portray how writers and practitioners have made huge efforts to understand their own community development practice. It is a process that has gone on for some time in an attempt to make practice more effective. As has been seen sometimes, the practitioners find other people’s frameworks useful, in addition to their own. So the thinking about how frameworks are used goes can beyond the individual’s framework, as they implement tools developed by others in a search to make sense of what is before them.

Why Do Practitioners Use Frameworks?

Interviewee 4 provides an illustration of what frameworks mean to the user: “Somebody was asking Paul Keating (former Australian Prime Minister) about question time in Parliament, and he said: ‘I love question time.’ I don’t know if he used the term framework, but he said: ‘The questions come at me in slow motion, because I know I have got a value system to respond to all of them.’ I don’t know what term he used, but it was something like framework or value system. So, it is like the surgeon in the crisis ward. He has all the knowledge learnt from medical training, but he needs to respond quickly and somehow bring together relevant experience and training into a fast response, without the luxury of looking up symptoms or

carrying out a multitude of tests; the situations call for a rapid response. Yet there is this stuff that allows it to go into slow motion.”

For this interviewee, the usefulness of a framework is seen in how it ‘slows down’ the thinking process, because the next step does not have to be thought through, as it is partly predetermined in the thinking directed by the framework. However, the framework does not restrict the work but guides the practice not as in some manual but allowing for the full use of skills of the practitioner. Hence, as was acknowledged earlier, both Tonnie (in Nisbet 1970:76) and Ife (1995:202), suggest that community practitioners use this making sense process as ‘artisans’, artists or professionals using skills to seek virtuous goals. This is also highlighted by Flyvberg (2001:2) who argues that: *“Community work (his term was ‘social practice’) is in essence more of an art than a science.”*

Interviewee 5 provides a rationale as to why community practitioners need to understand how effective practice is carried out and develop these frameworks: *“In the olden days community might have happened naturally when we were born in an area, lived there for all our lives, went to school there, played sport there, shopped there, went to church there, married someone from there, worked there, died there. Community happened naturally, especially when there was an external threat such as marauding gangs in previous centuries, or where you had to work together just so that there was enough food to survive. But community doesn’t happen naturally anymore. We have actually lost the art of being part of community. So, what we often find is that this area of community is often full of people who are really well- intentioned, who are very passionate about people, but couldn’t organize a kick in a stampede. So you need to basically plan and develop the notion of community and bring people along for the ride and develop their skills so that they can participate in that, it doesn’t happen unless you do it deliberately.*

It no longer happens naturally, it is about movement and action – it needs to be carried out deliberately.” The deliberate intent of the worker is assisted through them working out how they themselves work most effectively. The resultant frameworks reflect their values, skills and knowledge.

Interim Summary

In these extracts from the interviews, the practitioners have illustrated a number of elements they believe are important in frameworks. These practitioners see their own practice frameworks as being influenced by their understanding of themselves as individuals, with a sense of their history,

influences, values and a sense of their spirituality. The values involved are associated with the 'good' and virtues, so these include trust, honesty, respect and love. These same aspects help in turn to inform their work in understanding the history and values of those with whom they work. Consequently it has been found so far that frameworks 'frame' in the minds of the practitioners an understanding of themselves and others, with the aim of creating actions that achieves meaningful change both for the practitioner and also for the dreams and aspirations of those with whom they work. The practitioners see frameworks as a way of being aware of who they (practitioners) are as people, and who the people are with whom they work and inform the building of connections and relationships between them, whilst working in the direction of these values. These practice frameworks are about the community practitioner as a whole person combining in virtuous values with others towards a common purpose. They are action oriented and with a purpose aligned to notions of social justice. From these frameworks questions, are generated about how joining, engagement and relationships are brought about, plus the values involved in these action; as highlighted in the preceding chapters.

When practitioners have found frameworks other than their own useful, to either use for themselves or to extend into an organisation, these have also reflected the values of the individual practitioners, as seen in the data from interviewees 5, 6 and 8. This movement from practice frameworks with their individual power towards more generic frameworks to guide more general but relevant practice has been the subject of much thought, writing and research to explore what is important in guiding community practice. The next part of this chapter reflects upon some of this literature and research to see if it can inform the development of a generic framework that can guide community practice, whilst at the same time integrating the lessons learned from research and experience.

Frameworks to Understand Community Development Practice

This section reflects upon what has been found to date and asks the question whether the literature can be drawn together to understand if there is a shortage of data on what comprises micro and relational practice. Is there a common framework that can be explored to see if there is a balance of research and writing about the various parts of community development practice?

The second part of this chapter builds on this knowledge and through reflecting through data produced in the interviews, it is pursued as to how it is determined whether a practitioner is balanced and effective in their

practice, that is there such a thing of levels of expertise in practice?

From Micro To Macro

A Framework to Identify Deficits in Scholarly Insights to Practice.

In my search for a meaningful framework for community development practice that identifies the emphasis or lack of emphasis in some areas of practice, the closely associated discipline of social work is next explored to see if there may be some similarities. Although community development can be seen to be a much larger practice than that of social work, in some countries like the United Kingdom social work and community work have had very close traditions. Due to this close derivation of community work from social work, I decided that perhaps there are similarities in how these two strands of practice can make sense.

One useful work comes from the United States of America, where the North West State University, Social Work Department (1995) developed a framework within which to understand social work (Kirst-Ashman and Hull. 1993: Chap 4). Firstly they saw *micro* skills as being associated with the worker/client/individual relationship; *mezzo* skills with Working with Groups; and *macro* skills with working with organisations and communities.

Is this micro to macro a valid framework for understanding community practice? The concepts are not new as writers have used them in the discussion of human behaviour for over 30 years. Bronfenbrenner (1979) also used these concepts in exploring the Social Ecological Model, which is essentially a systems theory approach to understanding development that occurs in various spheres, due to action in different systems. He (Bronfenbrenner 1979:16-42) explored his statement that “to assert that human development is a product of interaction between the growing human organism and its environment, is to state what is commonplace in behavioural science.” According to him studies had concentrated upon the characteristics of individuals but mentioned very little that reflected the effects of the person in their environmental context and the interaction between the two. His orientation was on the effects of systems or behaviour, which as has already been seen are among the major understandings within community practice.

- Microsystem - Bronfenbrenner (1979:22) saw the ‘microsystem as a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics.’ A setting was seen as a place where

people could readily engage in face to face interaction and the factors of *activity*, *role* and *interpersonal relation* constituted the *elements* or building blocks of the microsystem. The critical term in the definition for Bronfenbrenner was *experience, because* he emphasised what people actually experienced or felt in this setting.

- Mesosystem - Bronfenbrenner saw this as comprising the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participated. A mesosystem was thus a system of microsystems. It was formed or extended whenever the developing person moved into a new setting. Besides this primary link, interconnections might take a number of additional forms: connecting other persons who participated actively in both settings, or the existence of intermediate links in a social network, or in formal and informal communication settings.
- Macrosystem - This referred to consistencies, in the form and content of the lower order systems (micro, meso) that existed, or could exist, at the higher level of subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies. Despite some differences there was enough similarity to facilitate communication over similar interests.

It can be seen that the North Western University framework and that by Bronfenbrenner are not dissimilar. Whilst Bronfenbrenner may have influenced the North West framework, this does not negate that both found the framework useful in making sense of their studies. Similar terms and parallels can also be seen in other works, for example this time in the community development practice of Community Aid Abroad (Burkett and Kelly 2004).¹⁶

Oxfam/Community Aid Abroad deliver training to people across the world and have a Development Practice Program (Burkett and Kelly 2004) that is delivered within a framework of methodology. In looking at this work it is possible to make greater sense of some of the above writings as the Workbook and Resource Pack on Developmental Method is in the main divided into *Micro, Mezza and Macro methodology*.

- Micro methodology - For Burkett and Kelly (2004:28), micro methodology explains the ‘how to’ of building developmental relationships, what they see as at the heart of development work. It is about *joining with others*, or *bonding* and they describe:

“We join with others, hear stories, see what they see, engage in dialogue and

¹⁶ Community Aid Abroad (OXFAM) has been working with communities for over 50 years and has learnt that simply giving handouts is not the answer. Instead they provide people with skills and resources to help them create their own solutions to poverty. Source: Community Aid Abroad website: About Us

work with reflective action themes. We do this because we are concerned with the agendas of the people and with the sustainability and mutuality of the process” (Burkett and Kelly 2004:28).

- Mezza methodology - This they see as about *strengthening groups or banding*. It explains the processes and structures of building small participatory groups that are the basis of public structures for promoting self- help and mutual aid and they describe:

“We engage with people to move the process from a private concern of individuals into public action – we band together to work on the issues. We work with groups of people in such a way that they appreciate their points of connection, make decisions and take mutually beneficial action” (Burkett and Kelly 2004:280).

- Macro methodology - Macro methodology is about *establishing organisations*. Explaining the processes and structures of publicly constituted organisations that are the host for development personnel and program resources and the key platform for partnerships and strategic alliances to progress the work. This they describe:

“We nurture partnership relationships in the form of community organisations – both as an expression of community in their own right and as an instrumental mechanism to achieve the public purpose of the organisation. We build organisations which are community based and community owned” (Burkett and Kelly 2004:28)

Burkett and Kelly do have a fourth methodology in the workbook which they call:

- Meta methodology: this they see as linking the small scale and local work to larger people’s movements for social and global change, linking the *local work to the wider world* and again describe:

“In this method we link small scale and local work to larger people’s movements for social and global change” (Burkett and Kelly 2004:28).

Can this broader, or higher level framework of Micro, Mezza (Meso) and Macro with its parallels across Broffenbrenner, Oxfam and the North West State University analysis, be applied to explore commonalities to assist in understanding prominent community development theorists, many of whom have written at length and researched the nature of community work? Is this framework a step towards revealing a community of practice in

community work?

To explore this question, the writings of a number of community work experts who have elaborated upon their ideas about community development practice; e.g. Rothman, Twelvetrees, Thomas, Kelly, Munford and Walsh Tapiata, and more recently Westoby and Owen, are discussed to compare their analysis and elaboration about community work practice. These works are then investigated to see whether 'micro, meso (mezza), macro' as a framework, can be seen to be implicit or explicit in their analysis.

The first work looked at is that of Rothman, which is a very influential framework from North America. This model is often used in examining community participation. However, it has also been found useful for framing activity across a number of areas of activity.

Rothman (1968) is a seminal work, being used in many university community practice courses. Rothman identified three distinct types of community organising: *Locality Development*; *Social Action*; and *Social Planning*. Is a micro to macro analysis useful with this framework?

- *Locality Development* had a major focus on community building. Working with a broad representative cross section of the community, workers attempt to achieve change objectives by enabling the community to establish consensus via identification of common interests. This typifies the methods identified with 'colonial' community development. Great store is set by the values of both participation and leadership.

This emphasis is mainly on the mezza (meso) level, as it identifies and reinforces common interests across the targetted community and certainly a meso in the Broffenbrenner model.

- *Social Action* often challenges leadership and expertise; civil rights groups and social movements are examples. It is an approach employed by groups and organisations which seek to alter institutional policies or to make changes in the distribution of power.

This too can be seen as mezza, but the social action suggests some structural analysis and aspects of the macro are evident.

- *Social Planning* involves heavy reliance on rational problem solving and the use of technical methods such as research and systems analysis; hence expertise is valued. Whereas the original emphasis of this approach was on the coordination of social services, its attention expanded to include programme development and planning in major social welfare institutions. This is essentially a macro aspect, it is about larger social organisation working with the content generated from the lower order systems into larger

aggregated analysis.

There is considerable overlap between the elements, but the focus on difference is useful in that it points to dimensions such as process, the role of planning and the tension between state and dominant groups and those who believe themselves to be excluded. The strength of Rothman's models is that they can be applied to a number of settings. For example with Rothman's 'typical method of colonial community development' (also highlighted by Taylor as 'community deficit'), Rothman identified *locality development*, which has the potential to bridge the gap across cultural settings. The model is useful in large and small processes of social development.

McIntyre (1995:9) critiques Rothman's (1968) models as being problematic because Rothman regards them as interchangeable whilst paying very little attention to the political values or philosophies underpinning these strategies or the contexts in which they might be used. As can be seen there is little that highlights the 'micro', which is at the centre of this current research.

Twelvetreets in his book entitled *Community Work* (1982:9) tried to make sense of what social workers were striving to achieve in community work. Writing in the United Kingdom, his writing was influenced when community social work was appearing as a model. The model was given a huge boost by the Barclay Report (NISW 1982), commissioned by the UK National Institute of Social Work by the Secretary of State for Social Services, Patrick Jenkin. The report saw community social work as: "Formal social work which, starting from the problems and the responsibilities affecting an individual or group and resources of social services departments and voluntary organisations, seeks to tap into, support, enable and underpin the local networks of formal and informal relationships" (NISW 1982: p xvii)

Twelvetreets made sense for himself of the range of community work practice using a coherent framework based upon the typology already mentioned, developed by Rothman (1968). These he saw as:

1. Community development – having the most obvious application in a small urban neighbourhood. The workers bring people together to identify needs and work upon them.
2. Political action (favoured by the socialist school) where the workers were more leaders and organisers of people in certain direction, rather than enablers and developers of people.
3. Social planning whereby a professional worker tried to effect change without using the vehicle of the community group. The mode of work was often collaborative rather than confrontational or campaigning.

Twelvetrees believed that community workers were likely to adopt any one of these three, through supporting and enabling formal and informal relationships, according to the particular circumstances in which they found themselves.

In drawing parallels with the 'micro to mezza' framework, Twelvetrees (1982) appears to use the micro (joining individuals) and the mezza (groups) in his category of 'community development'. He identifies with mezza (working with groups) in 'political action' and with macro in 'social planning.'

Whilst Rothman's (1968) three types of community organising are very apparent in that 'locality development' is very similar to Twelvetrees' community development; whilst Rothman's 'social action' is similar to political action and 'social planning' is the same in both frameworks. Twelvetrees develops the process further and names particular types of community work.

Twelvetrees (1982:16) said that to understand the use of his framework it is necessary to understand what the worker is trying to achieve or their purpose. To do this from his social services perspective, he believed it to be useful in understanding four kinds of activity : unpaid work in the community; the work of other professionals in which they adopt a community work approach; specialist community work; and generic community work. Whilst admitting that all four tended to merge in practice, he tried to overcome this by using a typology by Baldock (1974) consisting of five stages:

1. Mobilisation of other people (family friends etc) outside the agency to help the client.
2. Involvement of new sets of people in caring activity e.g. volunteer groups
3. Starting groupwork ventures where clients are given opportunities to help one another
4. The worker stops focussing on the client e.g. onto a tenant group to become a tenants' association
5. 'Pure community work' where the worker starts with the expressed needs of people in a locality.

So again in using parallels with this typology, the micro – macro framework, clearly 1 is about individuals (the micro), 2,3 and 4 are about working with groups (the mezza) and 5 has a larger connotation (the macro)

Thomas also wrote a very influential book in the early 1980s, entitled *The*

Making of Community Work, which is commonly used in university courses. The research for the book was sponsored by the earlier mentioned Gulbenkian Foundation and written by David Thomas. This research suggested that community work had three strands, which later Thomas (1983:106-111) elaborated and believed helpful to discuss in what he saw as the five main strands or approaches that characterised community work practice. These approaches were: Community Action; Community Development; Social Planning; Community Organisation; and Service Extension.

By Community Action Thomas saw a focus on the organisation of those adversely affected by the decisions, or non-decisions, of public and private bodies and by more general structural characteristics of society.

Being about groups and structural societal issues this is the mezza and macro. Thomas' community action is clearly mezza or even macro, having a focus upon how societal factors and large organisations affect the organisation of people.

Community Development was seen by Thomas as emphasising self-help, mutual support, the building of neighbourhood integration, the development of neighbourhood capacities for problem solving and self-representation, and the promotion of collective action to bring a community's preferences to the attention of political decision makers.

In the main community development here refers to groups and hence is a mezza level approach, though does require some larger analysis on the political level – which verges on the macro. Community development is largely mezza, as it is about group collective action in neighbourhoods.

Social Planning was concerned with the assessment of community needs and problems and the systematic planning of strategies for meeting them. Social planning comprising the analysis of social conditions, social policies and agency services; the setting of goals and priorities; the design of service programmes and the mobilisation of appropriate resources; and the implementation and evaluation of services and programmes.

This is all about large planning and societal analysis and fits well with the macro level of work.

Community Organisation Thomas saw this as involving the collaboration of separate community or welfare agencies with or without the additional participation of statutory authorities, in the promotion of joint initiatives.

Being the involvement of groups and between group/ or small organisations, this work is at the mezza level.

Service Extension was seen by Thomas as a strategy to extend agency operations and services by making them more relevant and accessible. This included extending services into the community, giving these services and the staff who were responsible for them a physical presence in a neighbourhood. (Very much in line with the Community Social Work which was being developed in the UK (NISW 1982)

Service extension is clearly a group focus including between groups and agencies – hence a mezza level of practice.

In summary Thomas was similar to Gulbenkian in describing what community practice was, as he defined community work through an elaboration of the practice rather than some tight definitive statement. Thomas also stressed the need to understand the purpose of the work.

Kelly and Sewell in their book *With Head, Heart and Hand* (1988) also approached the task of framing community work, though this time talking about what they called ‘community building’. This can also be seen as an elaboration in line with the Gulbenkian definition. Kelly and Sewell (1988) believed that workers needed “Head, Heart and Hand” in order to do the work successfully. By Head they meant the worker would think and analyse what they would do. Heart, was about having a relationship with the self and the other person(s); a sense of self and the other. Whilst Hand, was the ability to do, plan and take action – based upon the worker’s analysis and relationships.

Kelly and Sewell (1988:82) - described five models or ways of working:

Community Service: by which they saw people working for or on behalf of other people. It is by far the most common form of the work and is usually a reaction to an existing community demand or problem.

This could be seen as ‘micro’ if the worker was working with the individual, or ‘mezza’ if they were working with a group of people.

Community Action – Campaigning: whilst community service assumes that people have access to resources and decision-makers, there are numbers of communities which have little access to mainstream resources and numbers of people who gain little from resources. When we identify ourselves with those people and experience the same or similar difficulties as they do, we

can stand with them to oppose a system or particular group that is blocking access and blocking change. This pattern of work Kelly calls community action or campaigning. He believes that for this process to be successful, it goes through distinct phases. 1. The need to focus and define what the issue is. 2. Mobilise resources, including gathering required information. 3. Confront the issue and 4. Redefine the issue (he says that if phase 2 is not done then there is a danger that the groups energies can be sidelined or diverted by the opposition 'personalising' the process in order to get away from the real issue.

Community action requires the worker to work with individuals (which is the micro); to work with at least one group (which is the mezza); and to have some societal/structural analysis (which is the macro)

Community Work –Brokering: Whilst the campaigner stands against the status quo to expose injustices, so too does the broker. But the broker's work goes further. The broker (community worker) endeavors to permanently access the most disadvantaged people to the social systems that have been set up to serve them. The broker works between the two parties, advocating on behalf of one to influence the other. When people work between groups, or between groups and systems, they need a thorough knowledge of both. To do this the worker needs an astute political sense as well as a firm self-identity.

Working between groups is the mezza orientation; an astute political sense suggests some societal analysis which is the macro.

Community Development – Restructuring: This is a way of working that aims to change a system. It does not set about to change people as individuals but to change the social arrangements those people have with the systems. Due to the widespread use of the term community development to, according to Kelly, window dress soft options and stop gap measures, he identifies three essential characteristics of the work. 1. There to be a job to do and a people willing to do it. 2. Resources are handed over to the community, sufficient to do the job. 3. Authority is handed over to the community, so that they have the authority to act and not wait for permission.

Working to change the social arrangements that people have with systems suggests this to be mezza, being about group relationships. However, it also suggests some larger structural analysis and relationship changes – which is more the macro level.

Community of Intention: The first four models presume that there is a system in existence, which has resources and authority. At any time there is the danger that the system might take back control, so there is no guarantee that 'brokering, service, campaigning and programmes' will be sustained. This

Community of Intention work is carried out with communities who follow their dreams – regardless of the system. They walk away and do what they want, without being subject to outside power, politics or resources.

Community of Intention is a role where the work is with an existing group (the mezza); they acknowledge there is the larger society with which they may not agree– which is a macro perspective.

Kelly and Sewell emphasise that these five work patterns are not rigid categories or ideologically pure entities. Community service, community action, community work, community development and community of intention all aim to change the status quo, to a greater or lesser degree. They are patterns of work and patterns of social change. They reflect different community aspirations and , because they are all based and expressed differently, they set up different flows of energy within the community. Kelly and Sewell’s models are about the purpose of the work, all being about some structural change and for that reason fit more of a macro type response. However, as was seen earlier (chapter 4) Kelly also does go into greater detail, particularly in looking at micro practice and joining.

Westoby and Owen

Another work from Australia, draws on Kelly and Sewell and other Queensland sources, presents a more a recent conceptual framework by Westoby P and Owen J (2009). They assert (Westoby and Owen 2009:3) that ‘There are ways of thinking about practice know-how in community development that can be better understood (and potentially enhanced) by explicitly framing practice as both intentional and disciplined. Within their framework they consider four stages:

1) The sociality of nurturing inter-subjectivity and geometry of dialogue;

Here they particularly draw from Kelly and Sewell (2004), highlighting Martin Buber’s (1947) work on the third movement and the establishment of dialogue. A technical process of engagement is suggested, with the condition that ‘there is a strategic purposefulness enfolded in wanting to hear people’s stories’ (Westoby & Owen 2009:4).

This is all work with the individual and certainly fits into the micro level and acknowledges the need to work at that level, though due to the brevity of the work does not elaborate in depth.

2) The sociality of hospitality and geometry of moving from dyads to triads;

This next stage is about 'extending the invitation so that others may participate' (Westoby & Owen 2009:6) and talks of developing from dyads to triads which in the Queensland developmental community is technically known as the 0-1-3 method (Kelly 2008:71). In this, the triad is seen as a building block and not an end in itself. It is asserted that the practice of community development is a praxis that enables a group of people to work together to bring about social change through public action' (Westoby & Owen 2009:5), but there is no action or change social change associated with this stage.

This could be seen as work at the mezza level as it is about joining up people with the implicit aim of developing a common purpose. However, it does not emphasise action at this stage and could also be regarded as still in the micro level.

3) *The sociality of networking and geometry of web weaving;*

This stage is far more about action and joining people together or an identified purpose. Westoby & Owen (2009:8) state that this stage of 'community development practice requires the weaving together of community oriented networks involving people willing to act cooperatively in order to bring about the social change that is desired'. However, the emphasis is still on the purposeful networking of purposeful networks for change but not on the resultant change.

Clearly this is the process in mezza methodology.

4) *The sociality of structuring community action and geometry of engaging the horizontal and vertical dimensions.*

This fourth level is much more about the structural level of work, highlighting social relations of power, poverty and social justice.

This work is at the macro level, and although its structuring of community action is more the macro, it could almost be Kelly and Burkett's (2004:28) fourth category of 'meta', with its social analysis though it does not suggest a global orientation.

Munford and Walsh-Tapiata's work is entitled Community Development: Principles and Practice (2005:99) and similarly describes community work and cherry picks from a number of sources to define the key elements of community work. For them community work..

- Involves working alongside groups to identify discourses, structures, policies and practices that require transformation.

This reference to groups suggests the mezza level of practice

- Often it involves working with groups who have been marginalised and excluded from participation. Community workers assist these groups to gain control over their situations and to achieve positive changes that will enhance their daily lived experiences in all domains (social, political, cultural, economic etc.)

Groups and between groups is the mezza level

- Community development involves a vision of how things might be changed so that so that sustainability and social justice can be achieved at global and national levels (Ife 1995).

This larger perspective, with societal analysis, is at the macro level of practice.

- Community development workers adopt collective methods, harness existing resources and identify what is required to ensure that all populations can be fully involved as citizens in their communities. Identifying long term strategies for development is a key activity of community development.

This work is on the mezza level, involving groups and organisation of people, plus some societal analysis of citizenship – which is more a macro level.

- A key focus is on working from people's own definitions of situations, ensuring that community development workers are partners for change. Community workers work with groups and throughout the change process they model actions that embrace social justice, including an understanding that in top down approaches the local and indigenous knowledge of communities is likely to be subjugated (Munford and Walsh-Tapiata 2000)

They are again using the group work focus, which is mezza and some societal analysis, referring to social justice values which suggest aspects of the macro.

As a result of reviewing these seven scholarly articles which explore community processes and each developing different frameworks and analysing them in terms of this proposed framework; is this 'micro – mezza – macro' framework a useful guide for practitioners of community practice? **Interviewee 5 believes so:** *"You have to be tackling the big picture as well as the little pictures, to acknowledge the larger macro as well as the micro."*

From the analysis the 29 categories/stages/ examples etc which appear in these seven scholarly pieces, the micro is included 5 times (once as the exclusive category), the macro 10 times (3 as an exclusive category) and mezza is the greatest use, being 19 times (16 as an exclusive category). The micro appears 4 times across with mezza being work with individuals and groups and the macro is 7 times seen to be working with groups (mezza) with a societal or structural analysis.

The analysis of these writers and scholars certainly highlights that most of the practice elaborated upon is identified as mezza i.e. with groups and hardly any with the individual/ the micro. Although Twelvetrees suggests the use of micro work with individuals in his mobilisation of people category and then in his community development, this latter could also be with groups and hence the mezza. Kelly & Sewell include the micro as part of their community service and part of their community action, though in both cases the work could also be with groups and hence the mezza. Westoby & Owen are clearly similar to Kelly and Burkett in emphasising the micro, though this significance is perhaps reduced through having a common experience (Queensland), yet both have seen fit to conclude similarly from their research and experience. Westoby and Owen are the only writers to draw out the micro for particular attention.

It is clear that the micro, mezza, macro framework does provide some commonality and cross comparison between these writers. It can be used to make sense of what kind of work is occurring. In addition, and importantly for this research, it does serve to emphasise that little is written about the building of relationships with individuals. It reinforces the assumptions and conclusions drawn from chapters 3, 4, and 5. Certainly for those interviewed together with the accounts of writers on community development practice, almost all named relationships as the major priority. So they do in turn consider the 'micro' relationship level as very important which in turn reinforces the usefulness of this micro to macro framework.

This said, it is important to assess whether micro to macro framework is offering more than it can achieve. Ife (1995:249) warns about this in his search for frameworks, saying that there is a danger in any community worker adopting any framework and making it his or her own. He considers that too many writers produce cook books, which he believes to be of little use in learning competent community work. However, the above writers do not seem to fit into this cookbook category because the cookbooks referred to, tend to deal in detail with specified problems, setting out in some detail an action plan. On the other hand the writers that are mentioned above are taking a more holistic overview, trying to encompass and understand all

the facets of work occurring under the banner of community work. Rather than seeking to resolve given situations, they have loftier aspirations seeking to achieve 'social justice', the 'good', *gemeinschaft* and 'positive changes'. In this context, this framework cannot be condemned as being in the 'cook book' category. In addition they all carry the traits identified by the practitioners interviewed and the earlier mentioned writers in that they have a change orientation, involve people in the process and have a normative focus towards achieving 'good'. What this micro to macro framework does do is to highlight the weaknesses of other frameworks in not being useful across all forms of practice.

The conclusion that I come to is that the seven articles do provide information that can guide practitioner practice in terms of showing the emphasis of existing works and frameworks. The micro to macro framework is a useful overarching framework to convey the strengths and weaknesses of practice in each category. However, whilst this framework does help to guide practice in that it can indicate where weakness may be, so it can show how comprehensive a practice is within community development, it does not indicate how effective the worker is. The micro to macro framework could suggest that there is very little in the for example *mezza* (group organisation) level, but it does not show how well the practice is being carried out even where there is a substantial emphasis. It also does not convey the other important aspects, as identified earlier, for example the 'sense of self'. Is it possible to identify effective practice?

A Framework to Improve Practice

Because the presentation framework for the thesis is one of action learning, the process followed is about learning from experience and is about the improvement of practice. But how can practice improvement be conceptualised and understood to determine if it has occurred. Are their frameworks that are useful to practitioners in guiding their practice improvement?

Ife (1995:232) believes it is more important to talk about developing community work skills rather than explore a process of learning. He believes that one develops those skills as part of one's practice, and although classroom learning can provide stimulation and can expose students to possibilities and issues, there is no substitute for practical experience in skill development. It does not proceed along predictable paths, but rather the community worker is constantly faced with new situations and with the need to adapt and change in different creative ways. For Ife these qualities can only be acquired through experience and through an accumulation of critically reflective practice – as exemplified later by Schon (1983) and

Flyvberg (2001) as the process called phronesis, or praxis.

The picture portrayed by Ife (1995) is quite common and not one of immediate clarity. Hence the reason *Interviewee 4* felt the need to be concise on what is involved in practice: “*It is necessary to be clear on your role and skills. I can offer suggestions where I am confident e.g. as a facilitator, however I am NOT a content consultant but a Process consultant. I can offer expertise on “Community Dynamics” and “Community Development”*”

The earlier mentioned writers and researchers on community work (Twelvetrees 1982, Thomas 1983, Rothman 1968, Kelly & Sewell 1988, Munford & Walsh- Tapiata 2005, Westoby & Owen 2009) did not talk about the learning development of workers, including for example, the development of a sense of self. They saw an almost level playing field for the worker, without exploring a process by which they might become ‘better’ and more effective practitioners. Ife, despite his orientation towards this level playing field approach, (Ife 1995: 232), does believe that it is possible to identify five important components to the process of skill development. In this he measures similar concepts to Schon (1983).

1. Ife’s first component (1995) is *Analysis*. He says that good practice is integrated with good analysis. In order to analyse, the community worker needs relevant theoretical frameworks from a variety of disciplines, which can help him/her make sense of what is going on.
2. His next component is *Awareness* – both self-awareness (how he interacts with others, is seen by others, his/her own prejudices and blind spots, as well as what is happening externally (being sensitive to others and understanding local politics etc.) This appears to include strong self-reflection by the individual and the development of insight. Self- reflection does suggest a sense of self.
3. Next Ife talks about *Experience*- saying that because community practice is more an art than a science, community workers have to make decisions based upon wisdom, understanding and intuition rather than on abstract universal rules. Wisdom here suggests some idea of the self.
4. Fourthly is *Learning from others* – Ife suggests that watching a skilled operator can be a good way to develop one’s skills
5. Finally is *Intuition* – making an intuitive decision is simply relying on various principles, feelings values and experiences that are so internalised that one becomes unconscious to their contribution to decision making. It is not sufficient to simply trust intuition, one must seek to understand the source of those intuitive judgements. This last builds upon self-awareness, or insight into the self. (See ‘Sense of Self’ in Chapter 4).

Whilst Ife's components provide some understanding of processes by which individuals develop their skills in community work practice, it has to be presumed that more proficient workers are those who are better at these aspects. However, it does little to assist in understanding how a basic worker might perform as opposed to an expert worker – other than the basic worker is not good at analysis, not very aware, lacks experience, does not learn much from others and lacks intuition!

In response to questions that explore proficient practice, *Interviewee 5* suggests that the work can be understood in terms of levels through stating: “*You can't just work on one level.*” This infers that practice effectiveness can be seen as in levels, presumably with one level being seen as of higher effectiveness than another.

Levels of Practice

To take this analysis further a framework developed by Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus (Flyvberg 2001: chapter 1) can be looked at, where they elaborate upon competence and virtuosity in human learning. They state that detailed phenomenological studies of human learning indicate that people pass through several phases or levels in learning skills, where skills are understood to range from the technical to the intellectual. So unlike Ife who says that the skills can be learned, this framework increases the complexity from a flat playing field where skills are learnt to a hierarchy of proficiency. The Dreyfus model (in Flyvberg 2001:10) operates with five levels in the human learning process and if this framework of human learning is relevant for community work, it may provide some of the indicators of what is a basic worker versus what more can be expected of an expert and thereby a way to measure an improvement in practice.

- 1) The Novice -The Dreyfus model (Flyvberg 2001:11) identifies basic practice as the *novice* where the individual experiences a given problem and a given situation in a given task area for the first time. During instruction the novice learns what objective facts and characteristics of the situation are relevant for the performance of the skill. The novice learns to recognise these facts and characteristics when they appear. On this basis, the novice also learns rules for action. Facts, characteristics and rules are defined so clearly and objectively for the novice that they can be recognised without reference to the concrete situation in which they occur. On the contrary, the rules can be confront. At the novice level, facts, characteristics and rules are not dependent on context: they are

context independent.

In terms of Ife's (1995) components, the individual as a novice requires little analysis or awareness, they are having some experience and hopefully learning from others.

- 2) The Advanced Beginner - The next stage Dreyfus refers to is the *advanced beginner* whereby the beginner advances from the first level by experiencing real life experience, in contrast to the often deliberative and protected situations at the first level. Through these experiences the advanced beginner learns to recognise relevant elements in relevant situations. Gaining experience consists in a cumulative recognition of similarities. Recognition is concrete and dependent on context, and it is precisely context which plays the decisive role, for it is context which becomes increasingly more important as one proceeds up the levels of the learning process. So for the advanced beginner, the basis for action may contain elements which are both situational and context independent. For example; a driver knows how to change gears and takes into account speed.

In the advanced beginner can be found some level of analysis developing, with some frameworks from which to act. Awareness is limited but experience is developed for some basic analysis. Again the worker has learned from others. This would seem to best fit what Ife considered was bad in 'cookbook' texts, and as not requiring great skills on the part of the worker.

- 3) The Competent Performer - The third level is the *competent performer* which is developed because with more experience, the number of recognisable elements, which an individual sees on a concrete situation, becomes overwhelming. The individual lacks a feeling of what elements are important. In other words, the individual is unable to prioritise. At this stage, individuals learn from themselves and from others to apply a hierarchical, prioritising procedure, for decision making. By first choosing a goal and a plan with which to organise the information about the concrete situation, and then processing only those factors relevant to achieving the goal and plan, the individual can simplify his or her task and obtain improved results. Selecting a plan is not simple, and not without problems for competent performers. It takes time and deliberation. There are no objective procedures for choosing a plan similar to the novice's context independent choice of facts and application of rules. The competent performer, after having struggled with the problem of

selecting a plan, feels responsible for the consequences of the choice precisely because selecting a plan cannot be done objectively, but nevertheless must be carried out to be able to act competently.

In this level the competent performer develops goals and a plan and stays with that plan. This is similar to the novice process and not objective. So the worker has some relevant frameworks, is not fully aware of self and others, has some experience but only puts into practice what she or he has seen others do.

4) The Proficient Performer - beyond analytical rationality

In the first three levels the performer of a given skill has made a conscious choice of both goals and decisions after having reflected thoroughly over various alternatives, if the individual has not simply followed rules. In contrast, decision making for the *proficient performer* is more continuous and is not sequential in the same way. Proficient performers tend to be deeply involved in their actions and have evolved a perspective on the basis of prior actions and experiences. This perspective enables certain key features of a situation to stand out, while others recede into the background. New actions and experiences change predominant features, plans and expectations and with it the actions. No objective choice or conscious evaluation of appropriateness takes place, which is the case in selecting elements rules and plans. This seems to happen because the proficient performer has experienced similar situations earlier via spontaneous interpretation and intuitive judgement the memory of these situations generates plans corresponding to plans that have worked before.. Similarly, memory of earlier situations releases expectations about actions, which correspond to those actions carried out in similar situations earlier.

The proficient performer understands and organises her or his tasks intuitively, but intermittently continues to reflect analytically over what will happen. Elements and plans from the performer's experiences, which appear as intuitively important, are evaluated and combined analytically with the help of rules for decision making about the most appropriate actions. Deep intuitive involvement in performance thus interacts with analytical decision making.

The proficient performer gradually achieves intimate experience from different situations, all of which touch upon the same goal and the same perspective, but demand different tactical decisions. The

proficient performer then perhaps achieves the level in which it is not only situations which are recognised intuitively, but also – synchronically and holistically – the relevant decisions, strategies and actions. It is the level of *virtuosity – or artistry*.

So this is operating at a very high level of Ife's components.

- 5) The Expert - according to Dreyfus, in normal familiar situations real experts do not solve problems and do not make decisions – they just do 'what works'. Experts operate from a mature, holistic well tried understanding, intuitively and without conscious deliberation. Intuitive understanding comes primarily from experiences on one's body and is in this way at one with the performer. Experts do not see problems as one thing and solutions as something else; they do not get anxious about the future while they act; they do not make plans. Their skills have become so much a part of themselves that they are no more aware of them than they are of their own bodies.

In contrast to the competent performer, for example, genuine human experts exhibit thinking and behaviour that is rapid, intuitive, holistic, interpretive and visual and which has no immediate similarity to the slow, analytical reasoning which characterises rational problem solving and the first three levels of the learning process.

In summary the Dreyfus model (in Flyvberg 2001) suggests:

- 1) Novices act on the basis of context-independent elements and rules
- 2) Advanced beginners also use situational elements which they have learned to identify and interpret on the basis of their own experience from similar situations
- 3) Competent performers are characterised by the involved choice of goals and plans as a basis for their actions. Goals and plans are used to structure and store masses of both context dependent and context independent information
- 4) Proficient performers identify problems, goals, and plans intuitively from their own analytical evaluation prior to action
- 5) Experts' behaviour is intuitive, holistic and synchronic, understood in the way that a given situation releases a picture of problem, goal, plan, decision and action in one instant and with no division into phases. This is the level of true human expertise. Experts are characterised by a flowing, effortless performance, unhindered by analytical deliberations.

The Dreyfus model contains a qualitative jump from the first three to the fourth and fifth levels. The jump implies an abandonment of rule based thinking as the most important basis for action and its replacement by context and intuition. Logically based action is replaced by experientially based action. So advanced self-awareness is translated as intuition and the learning of earlier frameworks is replaced by experience.

There are similarities between Dreyfus' model and a framework developed by Burkett and Kelly (2004:75). They developed the following framework which explores some of the dimensions that can be used in assessing the quite varied capacity of development workers. This was in response to one of the recurring issues for managers who they encountered in community development training, which is how much professional autonomy can they realistically expect from a development worker.

Assessing the Level of Expertise of Development Workers

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE		
LEVEL OF EXPERTISE	LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE	USE OF PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK
EXPERIENCED AND TRAINED	PROJECT SUPERVISION	ARTICULATED PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK
CROSSOVER FROM ANOTHER DISCIPLINE	PROJECT AND PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION	EXPECTED TO ARTICULATE A PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK
NO EXPERIENCE BUT WITH DESIREABLE QUALITIES...eg potential, locally based, communication skills etc	TASK,PROJECT AND PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION	WORK TO A GIVEN FRAMEWORK
NO EXPERIENCE	TASK SUPERVISION	WORK TO INSTRUCTION

Source: Burkett & Kelly: Oxfam
2004

The four levels in Burkett and Kelly's matrix are closely comparable with Dreyfus' model. They graduate from no experience, to experienced and trained. They also move from working from direct instructions to working in a given framework, articulating a 'professional framework' with professional supervision to working without professional supervision but from an articulated professional practice framework.¹⁷ Whilst the earlier mentioned

¹⁷ Professional Practice Framework – Definition

It is important for workers to understand how their particular values, biases and attitudes impact upon their work and the performances they achieve. The synthesis of this is held in the tool which workers can identify as their own practice framework. The degree to which they understand this synthesis and use it affects the complexity of work carried out in

writers did not discuss these levels of practice, their importance is openly exemplified by Burkett and Kelly (2004) and inferred by Ife (1995) through his statement about workers learning by doing and by gaining experience.

Another Australian study that sought to make sense of teaching skills and understanding worker skills in community work was carried out by the Australian National Health and Community Services Industry Training Advisory Board (NITAB 1995). In 1995, this Board set out to identify work competencies for community work. The Industry Level Descriptors developed contained descriptions of different levels of practice, very similar to those identified by Burkett and Kelly and very much guided by adult learning writings such as Dreyfus.

The work competency approach was attacked by many as being incompatible with social science skills and too technically based: Ife (1995:229) dismisses the competency approach off hand, through saying, "the term competencies is largely synonymous with the term skills, and a narrow prescriptive approach to defining competencies is clearly inappropriate given the fluid and context-specific nature of community work skills..."

However, I would have to disagree with Ife, as between 1992 and 1996, I was the State & Federal Government Employers Representative on the Australian National Committee which developed the community work competencies for working in the community services and health industries.(NITAB: 1995). The Project Team involved in this process developed the competencies from the skills that were identified as essential to community work across Australia. During that time key stakeholders were consulted to identify the skills, frameworks and other aspects, including levels of practice across the Community Services and Health industries (NITAB: 1995: iv). [Appendix 3 Industry Levels]

Contrary to Ife's objections, the Project Management Team were very aware of the contextual nature of community work and believed that the work completed was very thorough and took into account the contextual nature of the work. The possibility of conceiving community work within a professional practice framework, as explored by Burkett and Kelly (2004) above, was given the clarity of reflective processes through phronesis activity, that provided contextual processes which were not limited by the technical (techne) positivist notion of know-how and analytical scientific knowledge process of episteme.

a deliberate" act. Source: WA State Reference Group Consultation on Community Work Competencies, Oct 1994.

Whilst the resultant competencies for community work by the national process did not provide complete answers for the contextual questions, they did allow for levels of expertise to be identified through the supervision process. However, Ife (1995:229) objects and is against the idea of expertise in community work, which in itself tends to beg the question again ‘what is good practice?’ On the other hand Schon (1983) suggests that workers learn from reflection and experience, through reflective practice, a process with which Ife agrees as a way of improving skills. However Bent Flyvberg (2001) provides considerable weight to the levels of expertise argument and uses Dreyfus’ framework of human learning, to exemplify how social science is an art; one in which one can become an expert, whilst still maintaining contextual sensitivity. These all suggest the inadequacy of Ife’s objections to identifying competencies as a valid way to understand the ‘how’ of community work.

Making Sense of ‘Intuitive’ Community Development Practice

Earlier Dreyfus’ qualitative jump was identified, in moving from an experiential base to one of context and intuition. A similar jump can be seen in Burkett and Kelly’s (2004) framework, where they move from the use of a given framework to a professional framework. This new level (in Dreyfus’ case that of the ‘expert’) can be understood through looking at Polanyi’s fairly esoteric concept of tacit knowledge. Polanyi (Schon 1983:52) invented the phrase “tacit knowing” in talking about learning to use a tool, or probe or stick for feeling our way our initial awareness of its impact on our hand is transformed “into a sense of its point touching objects we are exploring...we attend “from” its impact on our hand “to” its effect on the things to which we are applying it. In this process, which is essential to the acquisition of a skill, the feelings of which we are initially aware become internalised in our tacit knowing.

Framing the Context (the Setting)

The problem encountered here is that for any practice framework to be relevant in community development, it must also be contextually sensitive and useful. As has been observed, the difficulty becomes when frameworks are seen to be prescriptive and believed to be the ‘only way’ rather than seen as a useful tool to help in understanding a way forward. This gives rise to this jump to ‘intuition’ in the above examples.

Schon’s work ‘The Reflective Practitioner’ (1983), particularly his discussion of problem solving versus problem setting is very relevant when exploring

frameworks where there are these conflicting paradigms of professional practice, such as are found in the pluralism of psychiatry, social work, town planning and community work practice, when there is no clearly established context for the use of technique. In fact, Schon himself developed 'reflective practice' as a reaction against an instrumental notion of teaching where the teacher was a technician implementing others' knowledge in practice (Schon 1983:1). Schon provides a alternative description which assists to explain the above use of the words 'intuition' and 'context'.

Problem Solving and Problem Setting

From the perspective of Technical Rationality¹⁸ (Schon 1983:39), professional practice is a process of problem solving. Problems of choice or decision are solved through the selection, from available means, of the one best suited to meet established ends. However, with this emphasis on *problem solving*, we completely ignore *problem setting*. Problem setting is the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. Why is this? Well in real social world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from materials of problematic situations, which are puzzling, troubling and uncertain. In order to convert a problematic situation to a problem, the practitioner must do a certain kind of work. They must make sense of an uncertain situation that initially make no sense to them.

When practitioners do resolve conflicting role frames, it is through a kind of enquiry that falls outside the model of technical rationality, because uncertainty, uniqueness, instability and value conflict are all troublesome for the application of positivist practice. The definition of rigorous professional knowledge in technical rationality also excludes phenomena that have not been learned, as being central to their practice. So other more 'Artistic' ways of coping with these phenomena do not (for them) qualify as rigorous professional practice (Schon 1983:42).

Exploring this issue, Arlin (1990: 230-243), in looking at wisdom, and Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyers (1995: chap 10) in looking at creative insight, explore the term problem setting and call it 'problem finding'. They say that research within cognitive science demonstrates that the art of problem finding which they call a 'high level cognitive skill' is a much rarer commodity than that of problem solving. Leitch and Day (2000:189) indicate how difficult it is to attain this skill and in exploring the teaching profession,

¹⁸ Technical Rationality, is in the heritage of Positivism, the powerful philosophical doctrine that grew up in the 19th century as an account of the rise of science and technology and as a social movement aimed at applying the achievements of science and technology to the well being of humankind

they say that despite there being an overt encouragement for teachers to be creative (where action research is actively encouraged as the preferred mode in teaching), they find that teachers also show a tendency to 'technologise' their work, which is a positivist orientation and hence they seek to problem solve rather than problem set.¹⁹

When a problem is 'set', certain things are selected from a situation, that is, the boundaries of our attention are set to the problem. A coherence is thereby imposed upon the problem which allows a judgement of what is wrong and in what directions the situation needs to be changed.

Interviewee 2 describes this experience: *'It really starts from the moment that you appear in a particular community and continues for the whole process and entire time that you are involved, to different degrees. In the case of [...] that is exactly what happened. I came to town. I had to find out all the community groups and go and meet them, and from listening identify the foundation of the issues that affected them all. They didn't know what to do to help their community or to enhance their community's lifestyle. Not only did they not know what the community wanted, they didn't know actually how to implement projects or plan for projects.'*

Problem setting is a process in which, interactively, *things* are named to which to attend and the context is *framed* in which they will be attended to. So not everyone will decide individually on naming the same things as others might. Not only that, they will not necessarily 'frame' the context or situation in the same way as others.

On the other hand for Schon (1983:41), problem solving involves technical rationality which depends on agreement about ends and when ends are fixed and clear, then the decision to act can present itself as an instrumental problem. However, when ends are confused and conflicting, there is as yet no *problem* to solve. A conflict of ends cannot be resolved by the use of techniques derived from applied research. It is rather through the non-technical process of framing the problematic situation that we may organise and clarify both the ends to be achieved and the possible means of achieving them. Community work practice needs these such frameworks to address its targetted problematic situations.

¹⁹ This apparent contradiction arises because whilst encouraging reflective practice in classrooms and schools, the environment has become ever more demanding and complex with policymakers imposing strictures on the use of time and increasing accompanying mechanisms for bureaucratic accountability. The result is a more technical rational approach, which is simpler for all parties than the more reflective, artistic form of teaching.

Framing and Reflective Practice

Interviewee 7 identifies his/her problem setting or framing process “My practice involves strong reflection and continual learning, achieving a vision and dreams; understanding people and being a continual networker. It is about continually reflecting and learning and knowing when to withdraw, making decisions, as my analysis is important”.

Meanwhile *Interviewee 1* emphasises how his/her practice is improved through continual reflection and learning: “Another really important principle of my working, and this is the kind of micro stuff, is I had a colleague that I worked with for 18 months who came with a different set of skills to me, but the one thing that we shared (we shared many things), but one in particular was very extremely useful and that was we actually did a lot of reflection. Whatever we did we would debrief; debrief the details and then there would be some reflection on what we had actually learnt that. If that exercise, whatever it was, was going to be repeated, then we would decide between us, “Yes, in the next one we will try this. We will modify it. We will keep that, modify it a bit and try this next time.” So, we weren’t doing that kind of action research model, it was more experiential learning. I suppose it is basic training that you think has come from nowhere, but in actual fact it has come from your own academic background and experience.”

Ife (1995:230) similarly believes that successful community (social) practice is complex and involves learning and doing at the same time. In order to separate this from more conventional and limited understandings of practice, some writers in the Marxist tradition (according to Ife) have used the word ‘praxis’ as an alternative. However, unlike the technical positivist position which means that ‘with this theory we carry out this practice’, the essence of this community praxis is that one is involved in a constant cycle of doing, learning and critical reflection, with each informing the others; so that the three effectively become one. It is from such a process that both theory and practice are built at the same time. Praxis is more than simply action, it is understanding, learning and theory building as well.

Schon (1983:49) is very similar to Ife in observing that professionals often think about what they are doing, sometimes even while doing it. Stimulated by surprise, professionals turn thought back on action and on the knowing which is implicit in the action, so that usually ‘reflection on knowing in action’ goes together with reflection on the stuff in hand. It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the art by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict. For Schon (1983) our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff

with which we are dealing. It seems that our knowing is in our action. The everyday life of the professional depends upon the tacit knowing in action. Every competent practitioner can reorganise phenomena – families of symptoms, irregularities of materials and structures – in a way for which they cannot give a reasonably complete description. In day to day practice they make innumerable judgements of quality for which they cannot state adequate criteria and display skills for which they cannot state the rules and procedures. Even when conscious use of research based theories and techniques is made they are dependent on tacit recognitions, judgements and skilled performances.

For Schon and Ife successful community work practice is much more than ‘just doing it’. It requires the practitioner to be constantly reflecting on the nature of his/her practice, to be using the experience of practice to gain a deeper understanding of the community, society and social change, and to be evaluating theory in terms of practice and practice in terms of theory.

Examples of this ‘reflection’ about context can be found from the research interviews. For example: *Interview 1* was rich in material about ‘reflection’: *‘I didn’t plan this, but now you are asking me, I do it without thinking, but, yes, basically I find out some common points of interest and work from there. I suppose because of a sociological background, I am able to listen to a person’s story and hopefully just hear it as a story and be able to listen to it as if it was my story, and hence not to be judgmental about it, but to be respectful. Everybody, if they are encouraged to, enjoys talking about their own life and what they have learnt. In the process of that first and second and third conversation, you get to know one another’s stories, and you are respectful. Obviously, you are using the technique of very active listening. As you go along you have actually understood what that person has said.’*

Flyvberg (2001:2) develops the concept of ‘community’ praxis further, that is the combination of theory and practice, through using the term *phronesis*, which in Aristotle’s words *phronesis* is a “true state reasoned, capable of action with regard to things that are good or bad of man”. For Flyvberg, *phronesis* goes beyond both analytical, scientific knowledge (*episteme*) and technical knowledge or know how (*techne*) and involves judgements and decisions made in the manner of a virtuoso social and political actor, this is what he calls the work of the artisan. Flyvberg argues that *phronesis* is commonly involved in social practice, and that therefore any attempt to reduce social science and theory either to *episteme* or *techne* (the technical), or to comprehend them in those terms, is misguided. However, does this understanding of praxis lead to an insight to community work practice...as to what is actually done by the worker? Certainly in this thesis,

the process of phronesis is considered to be the reserve of the most successful or proficient worker, whilst the less skilled might be more positivist in approach and use an existing given framework of action.

Summary

Whilst the objective of this chapter was to see what frameworks guide practitioners' practice, it was evident that some basic ground needed to be covered before this question could be addressed. Consequently, some time was spent elaborating upon what community development was in terms of what was being studied, who are the practitioners and what they are trying to do. This process was carried out looking for some commonalities in these searches and considerable commonalities were found, in terms of the values involved, the emphasis on change etc. The conclusions drawn out reinforced the need for the earlier chapters on joining, relationships, engagement and values.

During the course of this chapter I also explored the practice frameworks of those interviewed and the frameworks developed by some of the writers to identify some of the main elements, particularly as identified by the practitioners, to see if these appear in the literature. This process revealed a commonality among the frameworks and literature in identified values, an emphasis on action and change and a common search to understand both the practitioners as 'self' and others.

These examples have shown that there are number of types of frameworks that are useful to practitioners in making sense of their practice. Some use their own practice framework, some have developed organisational frameworks; whilst some use other people's frameworks and at times some also cherry pick from many frameworks.

However, what is important is that what they are doing is consciously using these frameworks to make sense of what they are doing in their practice.

Among this search for commonalities, I developed a possible overall framework that might be used to explain balance in community development. Hence this framework of 'micro/meso/macro' was identified as being potentially useful. This framework particularly highlighted that very little has been developed to understand the micro and relationship/engagement practice, despite the micro being seen as an important part of community work practice. This again served the purpose of justifying the emphasis of earlier chapters on micro practice.

In relating the process of exploring what is understood to be successful

community development practice it became necessary to identify what a good practitioner does in their work, compared to a practitioner who has basic skills. In this exploration, a 'levels of practice' framework, in terms of expertise in practice appeared useful as a way of differentiating between basic and more expert practitioners.

In looking at expertise it was found that the literature provided some similarities between what was understood as praxis by Ife, phronesis by Flyvberg and the proficient and expert worker of Dreyfus. This was useful as both Ife and Flyvberg were looking at the more proficient and experienced of workers, which is the subject of this research – rather than looking at those who were more basically skilled and less experienced.

Analysing these various frameworks has served to provide some understanding to the complex field of community development practice. It is evident that frameworks are useful to guide practitioners' practice and to understand community practice. However, there are many frameworks, some of which can be commonly used by practitioners at times, but these are used at the discretion of the practitioners as to when they consider the situation is the correct context. It is their own practice frameworks that inform this decision.

Chapter 7: CONCLUSION

The following is a summary and analysis of material gained in response to the research questions. It is an illumination of data resulting from engagement, discussion and narrative with practitioners and a reflection upon my own experience and relevant literature through using bricolage as the main research methodology, and an action learning framework for general presentation.

The general question that I have asked in this research has been:

What can be learned from how community development practitioners conceptualise their work and their development as practitioners?

So in this research I have explored:

- The ways community development practitioners do their community building.
- How they conceptualise the development of their practice.
- What influences, theories, frameworks and philosophies underlie their practices.
- How these contrast with theories, frameworks etc. in the literature.

Associated questions were asked through a framework of action learning, whereby I reflected upon my own experience and those I interviewed to uncover whether there is a method to community practice which is important and, if so, in what form it might be useful. I searched to find out if practitioners had any concepts or processes in common which I could decipher from lengthy interviews with them. Indeed I sought for any commonalities in practice.

The ultimate aim of this research was to reveal new knowledge deriving directly from the two specific research questions:

1. How do community development practitioners understand the relational and micro-level dimensions of their practice?

This I explored in chapter 3 ‘The Importance of Building Relationships’ and in chapter 4 entitled ‘Joining and Engagement – Micro Practice in

Community Development’.

2. What values, ethics and frameworks guide practitioners’ practice?

This issue was explored in chapter 5 ‘Values and Ethics for Change In Community Development’ and chapter 6 ‘Practitioners and Making Sense of Their Practice’

The remainder of this chapter looks at the lessons learnt from exploring these questions.

Relationships

Among the aims of this research was the discovery of the ways that the practitioners carry out their community building particularly how they understand the relational dimensions of their practice. In this the practitioners who were interviewed for this research clearly identified relationships and relationship building as central to their practice. Yet whilst the place of relationships is acknowledged as being very important, until now very little has been written about how practice might actually build relationships.

Finding: Practice Details For Building Relationships

Despite a lack of literature on this subject, those interviewed supported the importance of this aspect and were able to elaborate upon what they actually do in practice in order to build relationships. For them the process is an intentional behaviour, through actively listening and looking for commonalities on issues towards which action can be agreed. The process is one of really actively showing respect, being honest, trusting, accepting and understanding. Relationships are about a common vision and values (See chapter 3 for more elaboration).

Finding: The Nature Of These Relationships Is Important

The conclusion that I draw is that this process is poorly documented because it is believed that: “relationships are things that everybody does.” My observation is that people think that relationship building is such a common process that they take it for granted. Only a few writers, for example Fletcher (1999) and Booth (2006:112) note this and also highlight how contemporary terminology about relational work is poor.

What I believe is that it is the nature of these relationships that is important, which was confirmed in the interviews and the literature (for example Lee & Newby

1983:57). As discussed in chapter 3, the required skilled work for part of the practice highlights a combination of valued skills (Giddens 1993:163) which centre upon a morality or value orientation. To do this workers' talents and abilities concentrate upon identified issues and emphasise the norms of trustworthiness and reciprocity to build related social networks (Putnam 2000:19). In all this relationship building is conscious and purposeful (Kelly & Sewell 1988:66) with an emphasis on face-to-face communication (NISW 1982:33-34), whilst morality and values come to the fore in terms of making democracy work through the creation of these relationships (Taylor 2003:20). The nature of these relationships is discussed further in the section on 'values' in this chapter.

However, what can be drawn out from this research in terms of values and intention, both from the interviews and literature is that relationship building is something aimed at promoting change, and the analysis for this change is guided by values derived from democratic ideals which include personal fulfilment. The overall agenda is a planning process aimed at achieving people's satisfaction as a foremost priority. Hence writers like Thomas (1983:19) emphasise that community development is essentially concerned with affecting the course of social change through the two processes of analysing situations and forming relationships to bring about some desirable change. Taylor too reinforces this and, like Tonnie (1995), identifies that community development practice is the glue to create a society of morality and value; and again relationships, morality and values come to the fore (Taylor 2003:21). Nisbet (1960:82) also sees normative ideals achieving good community and qualifies this further by stating that the relationships must be oriented towards creating this type of community and that the family relationships involved and those of small informal groups are a positive element of forming 'good' communities. Finally in reinforcing these aims, in the UK, Thomas (1983:19) emphasises the aims of community development as being democratically valued and people oriented, achieving this through building purposeful relationships.

Finding: Creating Physical Spaces For Meaningful Dialogue

As a further aid to practice, some practitioners emphasise how central relationship building is to their community development work, some practitioners intentionally used physical space as a tool, whereby they ensure that in planning 'good' communities they create physical spaces where people can commence meaningful dialogue. So they see this development of

physical places as important, through, using infrastructure and social hubs as crucial centres of energy, in a key strategy where people can meet and build relationships (Oldenburg 1999).

Dialogue

This research has confirmed the fundamental importance of dialogue in community development work, as it is central to building relationships through sharing information towards enabling action and determining the direction of where the process will go. The practitioners in this research clearly confirmed that their purpose was ‘to join people and to build relationships’ between them (Freire 1997:117-119. Buber 2002:250-251. Bakhtin 1981 [b] 672-673) and to do this they used dialogue, the nature of which implied a connection between people that is both respectful of the self and of the other; and in order to maintain this respect it is necessary to reflect upon the feelings and thoughts of both ourselves (self) and the other. The nature of this dialogue is identified in chapter 4 as an inherently reflective process as outlined by Gerard and Teurfs (in Gozdz 1995:143-53).

Buber’s (2002:250-251) fascination with the processes with which people build relationships and dialogue, has resulted in a framework that a number of practitioners found useful in this research. This framework is called is the ‘third movement’ whereby joining occurs in the worker’s response to the “other’s” response. The basis for this dialogue is built upon what Buber (2002) saw this as a reaching out and described ‘existence as an encounter’. In this process his concept of ‘I and Thou’ is part of his contribution to understanding the dialogic process. Bakhtin (1981 b:672-673) discusses this idea of the dialogic emphasising the meeting of ‘I and Thou’; the first (I) taking greater steps to understand the ‘other’ (the Thou), suggesting three contexts: the self, the other and dialogue. Meanwhile Levinas (Levinas in Bergo 1998) taught of undertaking selfless responsibility for the welfare of others. Indeed for Levinas, as soon as being faced with the ‘face’ of the ‘Other’ saw an obligation to do something to help; which he saw as ‘a responsibility for the “other” which existed even before the “other” has had the time to demand anything’ (in Bergo 1998:74) which in itself is a moral question.²⁰

Joining /Engagement and the Relational Dimension

²⁰ The research has noted the usefulness of Buber’s third movement from the literature (Burkett & Kelly 2004:42. Owen & Westoby: 2012:309).

Having confirmed the importance of relationships and dialogue in community practice, I have used the term ‘micro practice’ in elaborating on the ‘how to’ of building developmental relationships as being at the heart of development work. This ‘how to’ is about joining with others, hearing stories, seeing what they see, engaging in dialogue and working with reflective action themes, and as rationalised by Burkett and Kelly (2004:28) ‘We do this because we are concerned with the agendas of the people and with the sustainability and mutuality of the process.’

It is through this micro practice that the experience of ‘seeing through the eyes of another’²¹ is sought, through doing this the other person can experience the sharing as exemplified in phrases similarly developed from other parts of the world which are in common use and identified by Burkett and Kelly (2004:34):

“come in, sit and be with me a while”

“eat from my bowl”

“walk in my moccasins”

Finding: Identifying Two Separate Parts To Joining/Engagement

However, following sound observations in this research, I believe that the relationship building process can be deconstructed into two identifiable parts. This has resulted in new knowledge as drawn from observations made by the practitioners, who when interviewed, developed further on concepts found in the literature.

Through combining the data from the interviews together with relevant aspects from the literature and with my own observations, it is possible to develop more detail to understand the practice of joining. As already highlighted, the practitioners and literature strongly support the importance of relationships. Although both talk about engagement, it is the practitioners who provided detail about the joining process, towards which some contributions can also be gleaned from literature and other disciplines (philosophy etc).

Through interviewing the practitioners, I have learnt that there is a difference between the existence of relationship and the moment of ‘joining’. It was the practitioners who provided detail in their narratives that emphasised the separation of these parts of relationship building.

I now know that it is not all one process, on the contrary two separate processes can be distinguished.

²¹ The Foundation Principle of Rabindrinath Tagore from Gitanjali, 1993:85 The University Press Ltd, Dhaka

The research interviews of this joining drew out rich new descriptions of this process, from a felt 'warmth', a process of 'acknowledgment', 'attending with soulful, genuine interest', 'drawing out a wholeness', a 'building of spirit', finding a 'middle truth'. As highlighted by *Interviewee 1*: "My colleague talks of 'unwrapping the spirit'... it is about the person - the inner being. it is the 'unwrapping' potential (the heart) – it is the spirit of the person. It taps into the deepest things. It is about values"

These interviews therefore provided me with some descriptions for the feeling of 'spirit' in this joining, a description that appears nowhere else.

Whilst both writers and those interviewed do mention 'understanding, respecting the other and responsibility to the other' (Levinas, 1979) which is acknowledged in this research; the contribution from this research is about the 'spark' occurring, which is similar to the spark as it is mentioned in writings on carnival (Bakhtin in Clark & Holquist 1984), which is the nearest that the literature does come to the description provided by the practitioners. Carnival certainly fits as a place where the other's 'otherness' is experienced. It is a true place of encounter. However, it is not a place of respect or responsibility for the other. To me it appears a truly hectic place, a place of freedom that is devoid of ideology, where the experience of face to face is like Levinas' conceptualisation; seeing a reciprocity of equality upon the prior establishment of difference. To me the initial spark or moment of relationship occurs before the difference is experienced. It is when the difference is experienced that respect can be introduced and a direction for the relationship. Whilst both Buber and Levinas are concerned with the priority of sociality, Buber locates the basis for sociality within the "I-thou" relation itself, where for Levinas it has yet to be established (Bernasconi 1988: 101). Yet none of these descriptions provide the same understanding as the practitioners who were interviewed for this research, with their descriptions of a 'warmth', 'spark', and 'unwrapping potential'.

Of course, it is not suggested or possible to respond to everything in our dialogue with another person which then provides a dilemma for the practitioner who intentionally seeks to maximise his/her impact on specific issues. A way forward in this is suggested by Burkett and Kelly (2004:51) who say that the important task of the development worker is to hear and respond to the words which have **developmental** potential, that is those words that have both action and reflection embedded in them knowing that some have more reflection action potential than others, what Freire (1997:117-119) referred to as key 'community' words which allowed a way forward in

action oriented community development. This way forward is the pathway and meaning for the relationship.

Values

Finding: Values As A Triad Of Influence

This next section looks at the lessons learnt about the importance of values and concludes that in terms of community practice, values are best understood as a combined influence of the worker, the profession and the employing agency. Whilst previously these influences have been looked at individually and in some combinations, they do not appear to have been explored as a triad of influence.

Prior to this research, as identified in the first chapter, I was convinced that the values and ethics brought by workers to their community development work, were a very significant determinant of what outcomes were achieved. I have now found in this research, both from the literature and the practitioners interviewed, that there is evidence to reinforce my view and to clarify it. I consider that values do primarily govern the outcomes achieved in community development practice.

From the research interviews, I have identified that virtue ethics is the best fit in describing the values and normative framework relevant for these community development practitioners, reinforced by all the consultants reporting that they wanted to do ‘good’ in their practice. They equated this ‘doing good’ with ‘quality of life’ and notions of ‘happiness’ for the people with whom they work.

This section on values provides a review of how a worker’s community development practice is the result of a number of competing tensions within a framework of the values of the person, the values of the profession and those of the organisation.

Firstly, I look at the practitioners’ understanding of who they are in an acknowledgement of what has made them who they are today. In this, a sense of self is a very valuable contribution to the individual practitioner understanding themselves and how this affects their practice.

Values of the Self

In order to work with other people the worker must develop a relationship with those with whom they work that allows him/her to work with them. To do this, he or she must know themselves well enough in order to understand how and in what ways they can best relate to others. Little has been previously elaborated in describing the dynamics of this 'micro' practice or 'face-to-face' relationship process and workers need to be aware of how they as people affect their own work and the resultant relationships that they develop. Indeed as Kelly and Sewell (1988:56) state: 'A sense of self reminds us to attend to who we are, to acknowledge and name feelings, and to commit ourselves to the wellbeing and potential of who we can be'. Kelly and Sewell (1988:59) continue; "a sense of self is based in the 'I', but is formed and transformed in the multitude of connections that are made with other people, who are the 'other' or 'thou'." Indeed a sense of self was identified as very important by most of those interviewed in this research; as highlighted by **Interviewee 4**: "good workers have a strong sense of self and are 'fully' themselves".

This strong sense of self is utilised by the practitioner to intentionally commence a dialogue; whilst in turn suggests processes of engagement, joining and an understanding and mutuality of communication.

In discussions of the self, the practitioners in this research acknowledged how their work had been influenced by their life experiences, exposure to reading, their family and their training. In these discussions they portrayed good will and openness to share with me, the researcher. Despite their varying backgrounds they were striving for very similar things in the form of practice; all being driven along by altruistic goals, yet their practice had diverse roots.

While there was some 'taken for granted' aspect to discussion about implied values; notions of the good were implicit and when asked to elaborate they saw the good in terms of democracy, humanism and getting the 'best' out of people. This was seen as a natural thing to do.

In this context a common theme arising from the interviews, was the notion of 'happiness', which aligns well with Aristotle's concept of eudemonia (Aristotle, 2005:1:10), which he saw as the proper goal of human life, resulting in the outcome of 'human flourishing' or 'happiness'. For Aristotle, the common good is derived through achieving eudaimonia, a state variously translated as attaining success. Likewise virtue ethicists describe eudaimonia as the state achieved by a person who lives the proper human life, an outcome that can be achieved by practicing the virtues (a virtue being a habit or quality that allows the bearer to succeed at his, her, or its purpose).

Fitting well with these concepts, another common theme derived directly from this research, in exploring what is meant by doing good, was an emphasis on notions of spirituality, which some interviewees described as an 'unwrapping of spirit'. Indeed one interviewee identified that in her/his actions it was necessary that she/he too had their own spirit unwrapped; meaning that if they too began to flourish as a result of their work then he/she had been successful in their practice.

In summary, the practitioners interviewed for this research, say their practice is about doing good and assess their success in terms of happiness as experienced by the people with whom they work. Therefore in the situation or context of their work, doing good means trying to live according to one's values and communicating what one is doing with honesty, sincerity, and truthfulness in a form that is appropriate to this context (Habermas 1987). However, this is not a pure process as it is determined by the parameters where the work is occurring, which gives an indication that there can be tension between a practitioner's ideal and what can actually be achieved in a given situation. This reflection of what is possible to be achieved by the worker whilst staying true to their values is explained by McNiff (in Clandinin 2007) as doing good by showing how one is living in the direction of one's values and being honest about the degree to which one is doing so, in order that the quality of work can be assessed rationally. This assessment means that the worker has to be willing to articulate how they account for their own actions and their own good practice (p 321.)

This reflection of the self in the practice context appears for many of the practitioners in what they describe as their practice frameworks. These practice frameworks, as explored in chapter 6, frame the work and are informed by practitioners understanding of themselves as individuals, with a history, influences, values and a sense of spirituality. As already mentioned, for these practitioners, the mentioned values are associated with the 'good' and virtues; which include trust, honesty, respect and love. In turn these same aspects help to inform their work in understanding the history and values of those with whom they work.

So these resultant practice frameworks serve to 'frame' in the minds of the practitioners an understanding of themselves and others, towards the aim of creating work that achieves meaningful change both for the practitioner and also for the dreams and aspirations of those with whom they work. They see frameworks as a way of being aware of who they (practitioners) are as people, and who the people are with whom they work in order to build connections and relationships between them and work in the direction of a common set of values.

These practice frameworks are therefore about the practitioner as a whole person combining in virtuous values with others towards a common purpose, which is aligned with notions of social justice etc., as seen in chapter 5. For the practitioner this represents their normative framework.

Values of the Community Development Profession

Those interviewed identified that community development as a profession requires certain value positions, including those of participatory democracy, non-violent change, social justice, and so on. So the impact of the values of the community development profession must be considered in what becomes the resultant practice of the practitioners. In conceptualising the weight of this influence, it is important for a worker to make a clear distinction between those values which are inherent in community development and those which are not. In clarifying these considerations, Ife (1995:254) emphasised that there is a need to acknowledge a balance between the implied values of the work, with the effects of personal worker values; that is those of the self. He said that any community worker will approach the task with a set of personal values, so a sense of self is important (involving a moral position), plus a clear idea of the values inherent in community development as a profession. This combination represents the *normative framework* of the practitioner in the profession.

As highlighted by Ife (1995) community work by its very nature cannot be a value free technical activity. The act of community work implies certain values, such as the value of democracy, participation, self-determination, and so on. These values of the practice were reinforced in the research, for example **Interviewee 6** said: “For me the real drivers are social justice, equity, and the right to self-determination.”

Values of the Organisation

The third and last part of this values framework is that about the effect of organisational values. So far, in this conclusion and in chapter 5, the values associated with ‘doing good’ have been elaborated from the perspective of the individual community practitioner as well as the profession of community development. It has been highlighted that the principles which inform community practitioners as professionals are supplemented by their own personal values, in a sense of self. However, to understand the resultant work practice, it is needed to take into account what happens to workers’ practice in endeavouring to implement these virtue ethical values to

achieve the good life within the constraints of the employment context. In looking at the resultant practice I found Giddens (1993: 166 and 1984:25) useful, who identified 'Duality of Structure' by which he saw social practice having both a structural and an agency (individual) component. This means that the structural or organisational environment constrains the individual's behaviour whilst also making it possible. At a basic level this means that people make society, but are at the same time constrained by it; and that for the worker, practice and their sense of self are at times compromised by the organisation within which they work, and not solely by the immediate context of the work. The result can create considerable frustration and confusion for the worker, unless they have an adequate framework through which to understand the larger context, including the impact of the employing organisation upon their practice.

This resultant tension was highlighted by practitioners in this research who identified in interviews the impact and influence of employing organisations on their practice, grudgingly accepting that this led to compromises in what they wanted to achieve. My discussion in chapter 5 concentrated on public administration, because it is the largest employer of practitioners (either directly by the public sector, or indirectly through funded non-government agencies) and hence was potentially a major influence on practice. As a consequence I reviewed public administration literature over the last half of the twentieth century and found it suggested two dominant traditions or paradigms for public administration ethics: a bureaucratic ethos and a democratic ethos (Denhardt in Goss 1996:578). It is with this democratic ethos that the community practitioner would be able to most easily identify, with values similar to those of community practitioners, and when the practitioner might well see a better opportunity to pursue their own values. On the other hand with the bureaucratic ethos the opportunities might be perceived as limited and the practitioner more likely to make compromises with professional and personal values. Consequently in the latter may feel greater tension in seeking to achieve satisfactory goals.

Whilst concentration upon the public sector employment of community practitioners does result in limitations on research outcomes (for example lack of generalisation to research findings), what is evident is that the practitioner needs to remain action focussed, using practice skilfully to negotiate the nature of that action, whether or not that is constrained by the context and reduced by compromises, in order to best satisfy the values of the self and the profession.

Finding: *Phronesis: Contextualising and Making Sense Of The Art-form & Reflection That Is Community Development Practice*

From the outset those interviewed emphasised their ‘making sense’ process by which they meant their use of frameworks and particularly their own practice frameworks. However as portrayed by Hillery (1968), community development practice is not simple and little progress has been made in the field of community development to define the work and practice, despite having very many contributors to the task over the years. Yet despite its complexity, there are some useful concepts to explain what happens in good practice. Ife (1995:249) confirms this, though he also warns of not seeking a simple answer through imposing a single framework on all community workers, with the assumption that there is only one ‘right’ and ‘best’ way to do community work. For him a greater flexibility of concepts, or making sense process is necessary in focussing on this very complex practice.

It is because social situations are not commonly labelled, but seen differently by varying observers, that community work practice is identified as being an art-form (McIntyre 1995). Community practice involves a process of interpreting situations (the hermeneutics), which requires in depth exploration and insight. For this resultant art-form the understanding process of the interpreter is important, in order to decipher what might be relevant practice for a particular context and for a particular worker, for matching their skills and practice to the situation facing them.

Hence in identifying relevant community work practice frameworks, or framing community work, it is important that the practice that is identified is suitable for the specific situation. In turn for any framework to be relevant, it must be contextually sensitive and useful, because difficulties arise when frameworks are seen to be prescriptive and believed to be the ‘only way’ rather than being seen as useful flexible tools. If a framework becomes prescriptive it is in danger of binding the mind with one focus and reduce its relevance and effectiveness.

This need for flexibility and to be able to contextualise has therefore moved away from prescription. Whilst prescription might appear to provide more rigorous practice, the nature of community practice is complex and likened to the swampy, messy lowland, where complex socially important problems need addressing. Flyvberg (2001), Burkett and Kelly (2004), Freire (1997), Schon (1983), Ife (1995) and many others believe that those who are interested in social sciences need to take a different approach from that of the high ground. These writers all talk

about the workers who choose to work in the swampy lowlands. They deliberately involve themselves in messy but crucially important problems and describe their methods of enquiry as speaking from experience, trial and error, intuition and muddling through. This is where the workers gain their experience and identify situations where some processes may be useful (which if identified can be explored as potential models of practice). The difficulty and complexity of working in this messy situation gives rise to describe resultant practice as an art-form.

In researching this topic, I found Flyvberg (2001) very useful in making sense about social science, together with Ife (1995), Booth (2006), Kelly and Sewell (1988) and Thomas (1983); who all portrayed the dilemmas and difficulties in identifying the nature of good practice whilst also highlighting that 'contextualisation' is important. As has been explored in the earlier chapters, I believe that to understand community practice the frameworks or making sense processes need to consider relevant values and processes of engagement, joining and relationship building.

In all this complexity, is it possible to identify some useful common frameworks which help the practitioner to understand this art-form? There are many descriptions about aspects of this practice, but the notion of an art-form brings them into a more cohesive portrayal of the work.

Aristotle is able to take this description and understanding even further with his three intellectual virtues (episteme, techne and phronesis), as a way of approaching knowledge. Flyvberg (2001:56) elaborates the relevance of this to contemporary social science and explains that whereas episteme concerns theoretical 'know why' and techne denotes 'know how', phronesis emphasises 'practical knowledge and practical ethics'.

To break this down further, in terms of the intellectual virtues, one can see episteme as universal and about 'knowing why' whilst techne is about 'knowing how' with an emphasis upon producing things. On the other hand, phronesis is differentiated from the other two by a *value judgement* – being practical knowledge and practical ethics; rather than some kind of science. Phronesis is a sense of what is ethically practical and not equated to knowledge of a general truth. It is often about 'prudence' or 'practical commonsense'. So phronesis is teleological in approach, similar to casuistry in method, looking for what is ethically practical. As noted earlier, phronesis also allows for the mentioned 'structuration' orientation, in that it is about what is practical in the situation and finally it also provides for the action orientation of community development through its practicality.

Aristotle argues in favour of a well-functioning political science based on phronesis as imperative for a well-functioning society, stating “it is impossible to secure one’s own good independently of political science” (Walton J in Flyvberg 2001:180). Indeed he explains (Flyvberg 2001:128) that phronesis is the intellectual virtue most relevant to the project of freedom. Hence Aristotle was moved by a sense of proper order among the ends to be pursued, whilst Plato was moved more by a sense of cosmic order.

Phronesis thus concerns the analysis of values; “things that are good or bad for man” (Flyvberg 2001:57) as a point of departure for action. It is an intellectual activity most relevant to praxis and focuses on what is variable, on that which cannot be encapsulated by universal rules or specific cases. Phronesis requires an interaction between the general and the concrete; it requires consideration, judgement and choice (Giddens 1984:328 in Flyvberg 2001:57). More than anything else, phronesis requires experience to make the judgement about what is possible and practical. That judgement is a matter based upon values. Hence the term phronesis sits well with notions of reflective practice as too the methodology and good practice sought by this research.

Phronesis fits well as it allows a deliberation on values, is oriented on action and allows for Aristotelian characteristics. Phronesis also emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics being similar to casuistry and teleological in approach.

Frameworks To Understand Community Development Practice.

I have intentionally avoided the search for a single framework that makes sense for all good community practice. Instead I have identified and developed frameworks that are useful in understanding and describing effective community practice. The decision to use a methodology bricolage in itself suggests that a number of frameworks might be useful in making sense of community practice, with any commonalities being brought out by thematic analysis.

Hence during the course of this thesis there have been a number of types of frameworks or processes documented that practitioners, or myself or others might find useful in making sense of community practice. Some practitioners have developed their own practice framework, some have developed organisational frameworks whilst some have used other people’s frameworks and at times some have cherry picked from all or any in this making sense process. Often what they have done is to consciously use these frameworks to make sense of what they are doing in their practice.

Where practitioners have found any of these frameworks useful, they have usually used a reflection of their own values as individual practitioners in interpreting suitable practice, as seen in the data from interviewees 5, 6 and 8. Indeed in looking at the values underlying practice, it has been identified that virtue ethics is the best fit in describing the values and normative framework relevant for community development practitioners. This was derived from the interviews for this research, where all the consultants said that they wanted to do 'good' in their community development practice. They equated this 'doing good' with the 'quality of life' and notions of happiness for the people with whom they work. Another common theme deriving directly from the research, in exploring what is meant by doing good, has been an emphasis on notions of spirituality, which is in some of the interviews

It is possible to see in this process a movement from individual practice frameworks with their individual power towards more generic frameworks which guide more general but relevant practice. In the process of this research there has been much thought, writing and research to explore what is important in guiding and understanding community practice. In addition I have highlighted some frameworks, such as normative frameworks, the concept of phronesis as a framework etc. all of which have a part to contribute in a general understanding of the process and improvement in community practice.

Just as these frameworks for example casuistry, provide a contribution to making sense of community practice, I also developed another framework the 'micro to macro' framework (chapter 6), as a framework deriving directly from the data from literature and the interviews. I arrived at this framework from an analysis of the literature which showed me that there was very little in the literature of what the practitioners, who were interviewed, said was important. *I developed and used this framework, the 'micro to macro' to highlight the strengths and weaknesses in identified community development practices, to identify if important practice was not included in practice frameworks.* Finally I used the Tonnies framework (Nisbet 1970:74) of gemeinschaft to gesellschaft to assist me in understanding and portraying the historical context of practice.

Frameworks And Practice Improvement

Improving practice was the subject matter of chapter 6. Due to the nature of this research a question that could be asked is; 'as a result of being part of the research and responding to the interview questions, did the practice of the practitioners who were interviewed improve?' If the answer is yes, then what can be learnt from this? In terms of new knowledge, what can be learnt from

how practitioners conceptualise their practice and their development as practitioners?

Frank (in Butcher et al 2007:143) describes the nature of community development practice as a skilful one and not arationality. He sees the practice as an ability to make discerning judgements, based on sensitivity, perceptiveness and practical reasoning and confirms it is aligned to community development values and those of the practitioner. In a similar vein, is Aristotle's already mentioned concept of phronesis, whereby the practice is the opposite of acting on the basis of scripts and protocols in that it involves creativity, flexibility and attention to context (Frank 2004 in Butcher et al 2007:143). In all this, the action-orientation of the practice is looking for opportunities to carry out work that is in line with its values.

As was elaborated in the previous section, phronesis is a useful concept through which to understand community practice, yet phronesis calls on experience to make the judgement about what is possible and practical and that judgement is a matter based upon values. Hence the term phronesis sits well with notions of reflective practice as too the methodology and good practice sought by this research.

Phronesis fits well because it allows a deliberation on values, is oriented on action and allows for Aristotelian characteristics. Phronesis also emphasises practical knowledge and practical ethics being similar to casuistry and teleological in approach, both of which were described earlier in this thesis.

Whilst phronesis emphasises reflection and practicality, it does not automatically lead to better practice and improvement as it is not necessarily an automatic process. I was surprised to learn from those interviewed, that whilst they knew how to reflect upon their practice they did not automatically and intentionally do so. Yet the interview questioning quite easily brought out from them a readiness to reflect and improve upon their practice. Indeed, a number afterwards thanked me for asking the questions and getting them to reflect both upon their practice and the influences on their practice, because they could see that their practice would benefit.

However, all interviewees did respond to the interviews in a reflective manner which reinforced that they had gone through an experiential learning process. A good example is *Interviewee 1* reflecting upon his/her practice at a starting point stage with groups: *"I mean actually, it was helpful comparing the two. I hadn't realised that there were similarities but in thinking about this for you, the similarities are there"* (looking for a vision and points of energy). *Interviewee 1* again: *"I could see without really thinking about it that it worked for me, because it was actually Giddens in practice, but*

until this moment I would never have thought of the fact that he was sitting there”.

In order to develop data referred to above, the research for this thesis comprised of the practitioners being asked experiential research questions. An aim of those questions was to create experiential learning, which according to Kolb (1984a:20-38) is the process of making meaning from direct experience as it requires no teacher and relates solely to the meaning-making process of the individual from direct experience. It is an inherent process that occurs naturally, so the interviewees were reflecting on their own practice and learning at the same time. As a result it could be assumed that they will have improved their practice. This is the same process identified by Aristotle as *phronesis*. In addition, the practitioners can also be seen to have reflected in interview in line with Ife's five important components (1995:232), in terms of *analysis, awareness, experience, learning from others* and *intuition*. So both *phronesis* and Ife's components are useful in understanding how this learning process takes place. Indeed almost all appeared to have reflected in their practice as they had developed their professional practice framework, as result that required reflection upon what was the most effective way that the individual practitioner believed he/she carries out their work. In terms of another framework, that is Burkett and Kelly's (2004:75) framework of Professional Work Practice (page176) was found to locate these practice frameworks at the high end of expertise. Then finally, in terms of Dreyfus' framework (in Flyvberg 2001:11) almost all the practitioners interviewed appear to have reflected in an intuitive manner, indicating *advanced practitioner* and *expert levels* had been attained. This reinforced that they must have reflected upon their practice in order to develop these practice frameworks. So with the aid of this series of frameworks it is suggested that it can be identified that individual practice has improved through reflection and a process of *phronesis*. *A potential framework to identify practice improvement has been developed.*

Finding: *The importance of this is that this research provides data to suggest that successful practitioners are ones who reflect and think about their work and hence could be seen as public intellectuals.*

Community of Practice – As A Useful Framework

There are still other frameworks that might be useful in thinking of community practice, for example is it possible to think of community practice as a community of practice where there are evident similarities of practice and interest?

From this research, in looking at how experienced community development practitioners conceptualise their work and develop as practitioners, I have utilised thematic analysis to identify any patterns in the data. In looking for patterns of work and commonalities across practitioners, I have been asking whether it is possible to think of community development as a community of practice.

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting in an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). However, communities of practice are not a new idea, originally they were first knowledge based structures; for example formed in caves to discuss arrow heads; the art of cornering prey in Roman times; and the formation of corporations of metal workers, potters etc.

Communities of practice can be everywhere. Everybody belongs to a number of them; at work, at school, at home, in hobbies. Some have names others do not. Some are recognised, some remain largely invisible. Engineers who design a special electronic circuit discuss their speciality. Soccer Mums and Dads might share the time at games to talk about parenting. Artists might meet in cafes and studios to discuss a new technique. Gang members learn to survive on the street; frontline managers get together to commiserate and learn about new technologies.

Members of communities of practice do not necessarily work together, but they do help each other solve problems. They may create tools, manuals and other documents, they may develop a tacit understanding that they share. However, they do accumulate knowledge, they become informally bound by the value that they find learning together. This is not merely instrumental for their work. It also accrues a personal satisfaction of knowing colleagues who understand each other's perspective and of belonging to an interesting group of people. They become a community of practice.

From my research it is evident that there are commonalities in values and practice across community practitioners, as well as differences. While different frameworks are useful to different practitioners, there are similar frameworks across practitioners too. Indeed the practitioners interviewed for this research talked about meeting with fellow practitioners to discuss their work, in an action research process. Also in the interviews and in the literature I drew out similarities, despite the richness in practice being based upon a diversity of useful frameworks. There certainly was a common importance placed upon contextualisation as a term to describe what practitioners actually do to be effective in their practice. So while positivists

might be dismayed with community practice not being concrete enough, a common feature was that practice was both flexible and sensitive. It was relationship focussed, purposive, oriented to continual learning and values driven. So notions of 'context', 'values', 'joining' and 'relationships', with practice being action/activity focussed, were all common. Finally notions of large and small are important for contextual analysis, which brings in the usefulness of systems thinking (see next section).

Although in the literature writers like Ife (1995:274) argue that community practitioners cannot be seen as carrying out a technical exercise, he does identify that there are some commonalities in practice. He does say that good community practitioners do have good technical expertise, a real passion, a sense of commitment and real enthusiasm that drives them on. He claims this sense of passion and commitment comes from practitioners needing both a *vision* of a better society and a *hope* that change is possible. He says this comes from analysis and reflection but also that the purpose and vision are a personal matter for each practitioner; some finding religion as an important source; others a sense of outrage at injustice, intolerance and exploitation. A sense of history is also important, to acknowledge the present and past social economic and political systems and to realise that change is not insurmountable. The vision and hope can also come from the many stories of people such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King and others; which show that desired change can happen. All these point to similarities across practice, which derive from a view of community development as a profession, which could indicate the existence of a community of practice.

In this research the practitioners have illustrated a number of common elements that they believe are important. These practitioners, like Ife (1995), see their own practice frameworks as being influenced by not only their understanding of themselves as individuals, with a sense of their own history, but also in terms of influences, values and a sense of their own spirituality. The values involved are seen to be associated with the 'good' and virtues, which include trust, honesty, respect and love. These same virtues help in turn to inform their work in understanding the history and values of those with whom they work. Consequently it has been found that practitioners see these frameworks as 'framing' their understanding of themselves and others, with the aim of creating actions that achieve meaningful change both for the practitioner and also for the dreams and aspirations of those with whom they work. The practitioners see frameworks as a way of being aware of who they (practitioners) are as people, who the people are with whom they work and informing the building of connections and relationships between them, whilst working in the direction of their values. The resultant practice frameworks are about the community practitioner as a whole person combining in virtuous values with others towards a common purpose. The

frameworks represent an action orientation, with a purpose aligned to notions of social justice. From these frameworks, questions are generated about how joining, engagement and relationships are brought about, plus how the values involved in these action, can qualify to be brought together as part of these commonalities. In fact it is the practitioners themselves that often bring these commonalities together in a framework for community practice. Whilst community of practice, as a category of learning has been considerably discounted in more recent works (for example Hughes et al 2007), the use of the term community of practice remains relevant for identifying this as a group activity, although limited as a concept to understand organisational learning.

So the point of identifying this practice as a community of practice remains valid and is justified through reference to Wenger (1998:124-5), where he differentiates between a community of practice and other social networks, in that in a community of practice social relations are formed, negotiated and sustained around the activity that brought people together in the first place. Certainly there are many commonalities among these practitioners to think of them as a community of practice, which assists in understanding what the practice consists of rather than amplifying differences among practitioners.

In the same way that community of practice can be a useful framework for identifying this activity, another of particular pertinence is systems thinking.

Systems Thinking – As a Useful Framework.

Whilst not an overarching framework, systems thinking can help to make sense as to the process by which practitioners look at problem situations. Due to this research's emphasis on how practitioners understand social phenomena, there needed to be an exploration of the nature of any systematic interaction between theory and data. The qualitative design meant that it relied upon communication with participants, stressing context and querying subjective accuracy, rather than a quantitative design's emphasis on some statistical interpretation of theory and data. The contextual orientation and resultant querying of subjective accuracy suggested the relevance of systems thinking to the research, the development of which appears to have been influenced by similar thinking to that in action learning and the main methodology adopted for this research, in bricolage. Bricolage like systems thinking allows the exploration for interconnections of material.

However, people find systems difficult to comprehend as an intellectual discipline because it is not defined by the subjects or issues to which ideas are

applied, rather than chemistry, economics and literature, systems is more like history or philosophy. It is an intellectual approach to issues that can apply to a wide range of human experience (Chapman 2002:22).

Systems thinkers whilst recognising the complementarity in systems and reductionist approaches, view things (organisms and organisations) as wholes. This awareness is assisted through systems thinking providing a way forward, a paradigm shift, whereby the thinker becomes more conscious of the multitude of potential factors influencing a situation, or creating the contextual understanding. According to Senge (2000:10), systems' thinking gives the ability to see the whole picture and to distinguish patterns instead of conceptualising change as isolated events, from being unconnected to interconnected to the whole. This interconnectedness notion provides an insight into how ideas of context are explored and then understood by the practitioners.

Consequently systems thinking assisted me in explaining part of the process used by practitioners in deciphering the social construction of their work. It assists in understanding the interplay of influences, theories, philosophies and frameworks on practice and in understanding the place of 'relationships', the 'joining/engagement process' and the 'value tension' dynamics (self, profession, organisation) play as key dynamics in micro practice.

It is therefore a complementary approach to bricolage methodology. Systems thinking is a framework that can be used to explain and understand how practitioners begin to contextualise situations, as the search for connectedness between organisms and organisations. It is an approach that can help understand community practice, though it needs to be used in conjunction with other important considerations in this research, which are values, relationships, engagement and joining for a purpose.

So in drawing upon the data from this research and the resultant identified commonalities of practice, it can be deduced that there are a number of useful frameworks that can help to understand the nature of this practice. These vary from the micro to macro framework that I developed and confirmed the imbalance in research and that little had been written about the 'micro', through to the use a variety of frameworks to indicate improvement in practice; then there were values of practice and normative frameworks and finally community of practice and systems thinking. All have their uses in interpreting and understanding community practice.

Implications For My Practice Framework

The intention of this research was to explore what could be learned from experienced community development practitioners, including myself, as to how we conceptualise our work and develop our practice. The learning process has been mainly a reflection upon practices but also upon influences including what could be learnt from the literature.

In the first chapter, I elaborated upon my practice framework as being *Space, Structures and Values*. By 'space' I meant needing space (both physical, time and skills) to carry out the practice. Next by 'structure' I meant organisational arrangements to ensure the work was possible and reinforced (so that was about teams, supervision and programmes). Finally there were 'values', which was about me as a worker having values that I pursued at times being in conflict with my employing organisation.

As a result of this long research experience, what has changed?

Joining

I believe that 'joining' is now a very important part of my framework; though it is the most difficult part of the practice.

Previously I had identified joining as being part of relationships; but now I have learnt that it is separate. This conclusion was reached through the descriptions provided by the practitioners in discussing their practice. The concepts of warmth, spark and acknowledgement expressed by the practitioners, despite being new information not in the literature, convinced me of this importance together with my own recollections of experiencing this process. These descriptions were new and not dependent upon descriptions used by writers and other practitioners.

In this thesis, I have used the work of relevant writers to reinforce these observations. The difficult nature of the joining process is clearly identified in what Booth (2006) describes as a world of lack of respect for the other. He, as my research supervisor, ensured that I felt respected.

Relationships

I believe that 'relationships' are now central to my framework. This change of emphasis particularly came about through the importance placed on relationships by the practitioners interviewed, which was in turn reinforced by the literature. Previously I had identified 'space' in my framework; but that left the question of 'space to do what?' For both me now and those interviewed, the primacy is for relationships; indeed some said their reason for being was to build relationships. Yet at an early stage I identified that many people take relationships for granted, which may well explain the dearth of literature that investigates the process.

While I still continue to consider that by creating 'space' in order to perform the work is important, I now include space as part of 'structure'; in that structure is important in the process of creating relationships and that space is part of that structuring. So my former emphasis on structure has been moved; for example now in facilitating relationships through the development of 3rd places. The practitioners emphasised this need: that in order to intentionally build relationships as part of intentional behaviour, structures and spaces were to be created, where people could freely meet and build relationships (Oldenburg 1999).

Values

'Values' are still important in my framework, though they now assume greater insight and flexibility in the realisation of the different aspects to values; that is the sense of self, (personal values); the values of the profession; and the values of the organisation. This research has given me greater insight to the effects and demands of all three. It has added to my understanding of organisational values, but most importantly are the considerations that a sense of self has in community development practice, being driven by notions of the 'normative'.

I have concluded that my normative framework of community development is guided by sustainability²² and doing good (see chapter 5).

I now see values as more an overall governing part to my framework and not a separate part. This was partially informed from the research when the

²²What has community development got to do with sustainability? The term 'social' as it relates to sustainability is an interesting one as it has usually been discussed through notions of the 'triple bottom line' by which is meant the economic, ecological and social. The discussion and emphasis has been primarily driven by the first two and only inferred the inclusion of the social. However, there is now recognition that community processes are vital for achieving ecologically sustainable economic development. For example utilising the term 'social capital', Putnam (2000) marshals an impressive amount of material showing a growing body of research suggesting that where trust and social networks flourish, individuals, firms, neighbourhoods and even nations prosper (Beem 1999:319-325). In all this 'sustainability' is not ultimately a technical notion, but a moral one, involving some conception of the 'common good', of right relationships between human and natural communities (Oades 2007).

practitioners highlighted that there are continual compromises about what they can achieve - compared with what they may consider to be important; they felt their values were at times compromised by those of the employing agency.

All three of these aspects combine to influence my practice in joining, relationship building and systems thinking. This latter has been confirmed for me through this research.

Whilst the practitioners did not identify 'systems thinking' as such, to be important to their practice, they did so indirectly. Indeed systems' thinking is a common trait among good practitioners, yet it is not explicitly advocated. To a large extent this can be explained, because it brings with it the ability to understand strategies that use power to control within organisations, and so is actively discouraged within organisations (Drinian 1997:119). However, it is a crucial part of effective practice. Those interviewed did however talk about the need to think big at the same time as thinking small; to think of the big things and the small things. Practitioners drew pictures with interconnecting circles and circles within circles, to explain their thoughts. Many talked about the need to 'picture build' in order to understand what aspects of a community affected others and what aspects of society affected the community. In all these including 'thinking global – acting local' the process of systems thinking is important. The importance of this thinking, as directly exemplified by the practitioners, reinforced my own influences from my sociology studies and highlighted its importance to the analysis of community development practice.

My Understanding Of The Significance Of This Research

In this work I have shown myself to be an action researcher and hence one who integrates intellect to become embodied in practice. As a result of this research combined with my experience I have learnt to do things differently and better. My learning has fed back into new action which in turn has generated new learning (Whitehead and McNiff 2006:172). So my learning has led me to doing things differently. I have also documented how others might decide they could learn from their actions.

Through producing my own account I have particularly helped practitioners to see how they can help themselves but I have also contributed to the public evidence base and to the public knowledge base of theory. As already indicated, this account shows how other practitioners have learnt from each other.

In addition, I have improved my practice by collecting data to support my claim to knowledge and authenticated this with the critical judgement of

others.

Finally, I have learnt from the research and changed my own practice framework, developing a framework to understand practice improvement in community development (through consolidation of material from the practitioners, my experience and the literature); and indicated a number of frameworks for better understanding community development practice.

Further Research Directions

From the beginning it became evident that there is a dearth of relevant writing and research on relationships and relationship building. Some of the reasons for this have been explored, but there is a clear need for more investigation and research.

One evident implication of these research findings is that Training Programmes for community development practitioners could be developed from the material. There could potentially be training on:

- *Building Relationships.*
- *Joining and Engagement.*
- *What are the Values in Organisations?*
- *The Values of the Profession of Community Development.*
- *Discovering the Values of the Self.*
- *Contextualising (Phronesis)*

Whilst all of these could be directly derived from the findings in this research, in the tradition of action learning, training could be carried out to test the research findings and deliver greater clarity to context such as the place of values in successful community development. Indeed all the findings of this research could be explored through revisiting those interviewed and seeking their response to those findings. Further topics for research could be developed such as *The Place of Values in Community Development*

The implications of these findings for successful community development suggest that they could be tested as possible indicators or outcome measures for what might be good community development practice. The area of *happiness* is just one of these implied outcomes. The status of community of practice, as a framework for understanding community practice, together with the effectiveness of systems thinking as an explanation that drives analysis seeking contextually relevant practice, have to be further tested for their validity.

Finally the need for good community development practitioners to carry out reflective practice needs further research. The benefits of reflective practice were obvious to those interviewed yet not all carried out the practice consciously, including those practitioners who appeared to be the most expert in their practice. However, this research has produced enough new knowledge to extend subsequent research into a larger pool of practitioners and test further the validity of the findings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Contact Form

CONTACT FORM

NAME:

(Individual, Community, Community Group etc.)

DATE:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT MADE AT:

WHO WAS SPOKEN TO:

DEPARTMENT'S PROGRAMME AREAS

CAUSAL FACTORS	FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT		PROTECTION & CARE OF CHILDREN	
	PREVENTION & DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT & SUPPORT	PROTECTION & INTERVENTION TREATMENT	SUPPORTED CARE
	HOUSING			
	HEALTH			
	INCOME			
	EDUCATION			
	TRANSPORT			
	FACILITIES			
	FAMILY BREAKDOWN			
	LACK OF RESOURCES			
	KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS OF RESOURCES			
	OTHERS			

SUMMARY OF PROBLEM:

(ie: from above this is mainly a)

IMMEDIATE ACTION:

FUTURE ACTION & PREVENTION TO

STOP IT HAPPENING AGAIN:

OFFICER'S NAME: _____

WHICH MODEL(S) HAVE YOU USED			
COMMUNITY SERVICES		COMMUNITY WORK	
COMMUNITY ACTION		INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY	
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			

TICK	PROBLEM
	Family Conflict
	Clothing
	Transport
	Education
	No Money
	Child Abuse
	Domestic Violence
	Truancy
	Marital
	No Food
	Social Security
	Housing
	Neglect
	Alcohol
	Stealing
	Land
	Pre-school
	Day Care
	Drugs
	Mining
	Parent/Child Conflict
	Burial
	Rent
	Bills
	Isolation
	Legal
	Wages
	Health
	Adoption
	OTHER:

Appendix 2: An analysis of research data

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

- STEP 1. Interview questions produce narratives
 STEP 2. Interviews transcribed – Re read and check transcription content with interviewee
 STEP 3. Action/experiential learning quotations identified – Through re-read of transcription
 STEP 4. Theme of quotations identified – Through re-read of transcription
 STEP 5. Same themes transcribed into groupings
 STEP 6. Consolidation of themes into relevant chapters- Re-read of quotation transcription
 STEP 7. Quotations allocated to chapters

Transcription	All interviews transcribed
Action learning quote identified	<p><i>Two Examples:</i></p> <p>Interviewee 3. "A key factor is relationships. Whole community building stuff is not only building relationships between people, but between organisations, and between people in organisations, so it is multi-level. It is also about having goals and working towards them together. However, building relationships is central to practice – you have to understand that you have to build relationships. It is about dreams and working towards them but the test is to restrain from doing it yourself and concentrating upon maintaining the relationships and facilitating the connections. Whilst issue are important, the work is about linking together people with common interests. The test for your effectiveness is whether they follow up. Sustainability is about ongoing activity – that is it is important having the skills and resources to keep going."</p> <p>Interviewee 4. "To me the ideas come from the dialogue and to create the dialogue I use all sorts of methods – appreciative enquiry, conflict resolution, in a project in Kalgoorlie, the method was really a conflict resolution method, (you know, you could pick it up on the <i>conflict resolution</i> website, or wherever). In terms of the method in the Port Hedland Cultural Development Plan, and the Mandurah Cultural development, probably the closest you would come to would be <i>appreciative enquiry</i>. These are which I used in facilitation.</p> <p>For me this is a process of 'making the dialogue easier' or 'making the dialogue work'. This happens through, 1. Equalizing the power in the room or in the process. 2. Drawing out the ideas of people in the equalizing process. 3. Making sure the information gets recorded. 4. Drawing together all the bits into the same space so that they can be explored.</p> <p>Whilst I have expertise in process and community development dynamics – some of my expert advice comes from the actual dialogue – that is the answers come from the people in the dialogue - which is the 'middle truth', which is not there unless the 2 parties are in dialogue."</p>
Identify Themes	<p><i>Dialogue</i> <i>Individual practice</i> <i>Expertise</i> <i>Spirit</i> <i>Sense of self</i> <i>Engagement</i> <i>Relationships</i> <i>Frameworks</i> <i>Values</i> <i>Influences</i> <i>Literature</i> <i>Community Development Definitions</i></p>
Allocate quotations to Themes	<p>For example: <i>Interviewee 3 above 'Relationships'</i> <i>Interviewee 4 above 'Dialogue'</i></p>
Consolidate Themes	<p><i>Engagement (dialogue, spirit)</i> <i>Values (influences, sense of self)</i> <i>Frameworks (expertise, individual practice, literature, cd definitions)</i> <i>Relationships</i></p>
Chapters identified	<p>Engagement Values Frameworks Relationships</p>
Allocate quotations to chapters	

Appendix 3: Industry Level Descriptors

Industry Level Descriptors			
Level	Knowledge/Expertise	Supervision	Tasks
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive applications in the broader industry, community systems and development of theoretical frameworks. Requires extensive knowledge across a range of subject areas and in considerable detail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision through accountability and reporting (often self defined) both inside and outside the organisation, with functional responsibility for all components of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of multi service organisation with complex responsibilities for all components of programs, services, structures and practice. Initiates and determines significant changes in organisational and industry culture, policies and practice
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires complex knowledge and application of combinations of skills, initiatives in developing and managing interactive and coordinated structures. Requires complex knowledge of areas which have direct impact on community and organisation and informed by a wide range of social and practice theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indirect and collaborative supervision from management and peers. Will be responsible for the supervision of Level A and B workers. Operate in accountability requirements both inside and outside the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination of a range of different programs from a service with related focus and objectives. Initiates outcomes and social change in the broader community.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires knowledge, skills and theory determined by the program and its targets within a specified range of community. General organisation and service delivery skills with specialisation in program targets. Experienced in the development and delivery of single program services where parameters are determined by the given specifications of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision indirectly from management or coordinator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires detailed interactions with a specific community determined by the program objectives and targets
A Entry Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of community work based on practical experience, general principles and limited application of theory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision and guidance can either be direct and immediate or indirect through guidelines, policy, reporting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides supportive functions, often general administrative Community work is conducted under direction and supervision is confined to specific interactions guided by service parameters and organisation's guidelines Parameters determined by prescribed, designated scope of target community and organisation's practice

[Source: Australian Standards & Curriculum Council

Competency Standards Advisory Committee of the National Industry Training Advisory Board 1995]

The Community Work Industry level descriptors (above) saw four levels of community work, from the most expert (D) to the industry entry level (A). The expertise of the worker is reflected in the level of supervision received, from direct supervision, to the self defined nature of the highest level. There is limited theory and some practical experience in the entry level whilst extensive knowledge and application and development of theoretical frameworks.